



Teambuilding

Facilitation

M a n u a l

A Guide to

Leading and

Facilitating

Teambuilding

Activities

Contents

3 Chapter 1

- 3 Introduction
- 4 Facilitator Guidelines

5 Chapter 2: Teambuilding Facilitation

- 5 Program Planning and Sequencing
- 7 Sample Sequences
- 8 Challenge by Choice
- 8 Full Value Contract
- 10 The Leader's Role
- 10 The Experiential Learning Cycle
- 11 The Adventure Wave
- 11 Briefing the Activities
- 12 Leading the Activities
- 13 Facilitating the Debrief
- 14 Experiential Debriefing
- 16 Safety
- 16 Spotting

17 Chapter 3: Teambuilding Activities

- 17 Large Group Warm-Ups
- 25 Small Group Warm-Ups
- 33 Level I Activities
- 47 Level II Activities

62 Chapter 4: Games, Games, and More Games

68 Chapter 5: Appendixes

- 68 The Facilitator's Bag of Tricks
- 69 People Bingo Cards
- 70 Resource List

Chapter 1

Introduction

This manual is a resource for teambuilding activities for adult and youth leaders with 4-H. This manual will help you effectively lead teambuilding programs. However, it is not exhaustive. Nor is it possible to read these pages and expect to become an expert in leading teambuilding programs. We are all lifelong learners and continue to add to our methods and styles as we learn new thoughts, ideas, and concepts. In that regard, please use this manual as a guide as you experiment with your particular leadership and facilitation style.

Teambuilding Overview

Teambuilding activities are exercises that help teams build cohesion and work through common group issues. They are used as educational tools for a variety of individuals, groups, and organizations. In addition, teambuilding activities provide opportunities for participants to combine individual talents and abilities with an awareness of the need to develop cooperation and trust within the group.

Teambuilding also provides participants with opportunities for self-exploration and growth. As individuals push themselves beyond their comfort zones, they are able to grow and learn about themselves. Because everyone has a different level of comfort regarding emotional and physical challenges, each person is encouraged throughout the program to set their own challenge goals. This notion of “Challenge by Choice” should be emphasized at the beginning of each teambuilding program. This helps to ensure that while individuals are pushing their levels of comfort they are also being safely challenged.

At the end of each activity, participants are given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and relate them to daily life. This reflection transforms the one-time experience of teambuilding into a method for bringing about long-term, positive changes.

Teambuilding Objectives

- Increase each participant's sense of confidence and create a feeling of accomplishment.
- Increase participants' understanding of themselves and one another.
- Develop the initiative and responsibilities necessary to accomplish a task through group planning and teamwork, brainstorming, and problem solving.
- Help facilitate group growth, ease a group through a difficult period or process, and develop cohesiveness among group members.
- Develop respect and acceptance for the abilities and limitations of each individual.
- Use effective communication skills in group interactions.
- Develop the skills necessary for group interaction.
- Develop leadership skills.
- Clarify the way participants behave in various situations and what effects these behaviors have on the group.

Facilitator Guidelines

These guidelines are suggested skills and competencies. Each person has a unique set of skills and experiences and may have different facilitation training needs.

Prerequisites

- Good physical and mental health
- Completed a facilitator training session from an extension educator or volunteer

Competencies

- Solid verbal communication skills
- Ability to work with a wide variety of people in challenging situations
- Common sense and good judgment
- Flexibility in handling multiple demands of program
- An open mind and willingness to learn
- Ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- Empathy (caring) for others
- Willingness to play and share a sense of adventure with participants
- Good sense of humor

Skills

- A basic understanding of the benefits and objectives of teambuilding
- Ability to introduce the rules, consequences, and safety considerations for teambuilding activities
- An understanding of the objectives and a knowledge of the teambuilding activities
- An understanding of the concepts of debriefing
- Ability to demonstrate proper spotting and safety techniques

Warning

Improper use of the adventure activities described in this manual can result in serious injury. The activities should not be attempted without the supervision of trained and properly qualified leaders.

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Chapter 2: Teambuilding Facilitation

Program Planning and Sequencing

All teambuilding programs should be designed to meet the needs and objectives of the group. An assessment should be done in advance so that the facilitator knows what to expect in regard to the needs and qualities of the group. As a facilitator, choosing the activities that you feel will best meet the group's goals is an important first step in developing a teambuilding program.

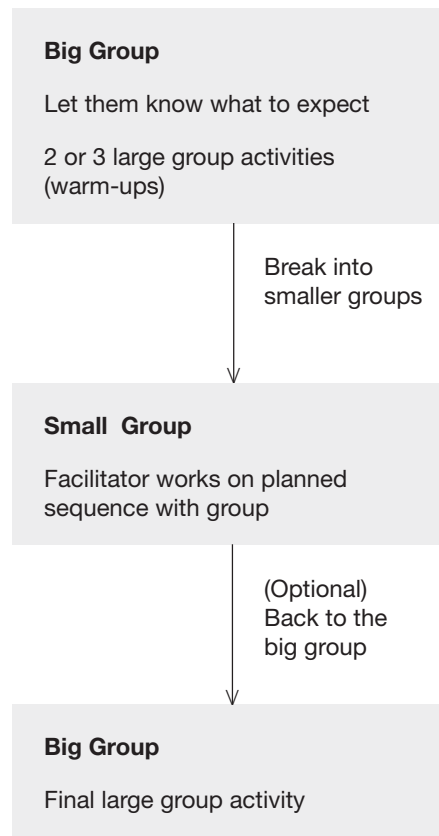
Program Length

The program length and amount of time available will vary depending on your group.

Group Size

One facilitator per 12 participants (occasionally one facilitator per 15 participants) is the ideal group size.

Program Schedule



Setting the Stage

- Talk about the group members' expectations for the program. What do they want?
- Help participants generate goals and expectations for the program.
- Challenge by Choice
- Set the mood and tone: upbeat, confident, compassionate

Choosing Activities

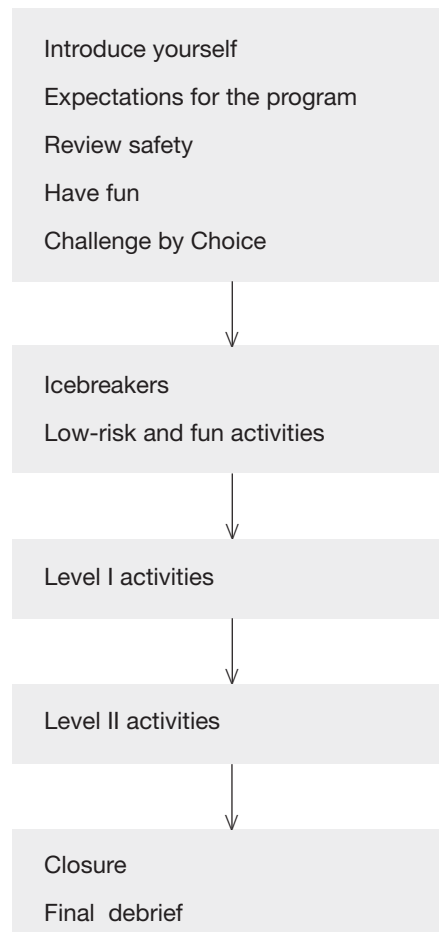
After gaining an understanding of the group you will be working with, begin to plan the program. Keep the following general information in mind as you select activities:

- Ages 8–12.
You may want to choose activities that require physical activity to keep them interested. Experiential debriefs will work best. See pages 14–15.
- Ages 12–16.
You may need to plan more activities for this age, as they will spend less time on debriefing than older students and adults.
- College-aged and older.
Alternate physical and cognitive challenges.
- Adults.
They like to spend time processing each activity. Therefore, don't be surprised if you don't get through all the activities that you had planned.

See activity pages for ideas.

Sequencing Activities

After you have chosen the activities that you feel will help the group meet its goals and objectives, arrange them in a sequence that will be comfortable for the group.



Adjusting the Plan

Deciding whether to make adjustments to the activities you plan is a skill that takes practice. As a facilitator, watch how the group works together and be prepared to substitute activities that will help them to better meet their objectives. The following are some general questions that may be helpful as you make your decision to readjust:

- Are there any *resistant members*?
- Are they *comfortable with physical contact needed* for some activities?
- Are they being *sufficiently challenged*?
- Do they *plan and listen* to one another?
- Do you have a participant that is *injured or unable to participate* in your original plan of activities?
- How's the *weather*? You may need to adjust your plan from outside to inside.

For example, if one or two members are resistant, you may not want to begin with activities that require a high degree of support and trust. If the participants are not comfortable with physical contact, you may need to move gradually into activities that require them to physically support others. If they seem to be disinterested, increase the challenge of an activity to spark their enthusiasm. If you find that they are not planning or listening, you might try some introductory communication exercises.

Sample Sequences

The following are examples of teambuilding sequences that are appropriate for specified age-groups and group sizes according to time allotment. Use your creativity and exchange activities that you feel would be better suited for the group that you are working with.

When working with groups that know one another, simply substitute the name games with another activity.

Typically, you will open a program with a big group and then break into smaller groups after a big group opener. In the following sequences watch for **BG** which means **Big Group** or **SG** which means **Small Group**.

One Hour

Ages: 10–adult

Big Group size: 20 people

Small Group size: 8–15 people

For groups who don't know each other

Inside or outside

- Begin with a tag game like Everybody's It to get people warmed up (BG)
- To help to learn names, perhaps Incorporations (BG) or Adventure Name (SG)
- Follow this with a nonthreatening activity like Ball Toss (SG) or Line Ups (BG)
- River Crossing (SG)
- Closing: Go around: What did you learn? (BG or SG)

7 hours with lunch break

Ages: high school–adult

Big Group size: 20 people

Small Group size: 8 people

- Incorporations or Have You Ever? (BG)
- Wobble, Wobble (BG)
- Adventure Name Game (SG)
- Challenge by Choice (SG)
- Full Value Contract (SG)
- Circle the Circle (SG)
- Ball Toss (SG)
- Interview and Introduction (SG)
- Jump Rope (SG)
- River Crossing (SG)
- Key Punch (SG)
- *Lunch Break*
- Mosquito Tag or Partner Tag (SG)
- Toxic Waste
- Trust Walk
- Minefield
- Blind Polygon
- Closing: Skit about what you learned today

Meeting every once in a while or at regular intervals

Group that knows one another

Big Group or Small Group

Meeting 1 (1 hour)

- Puzzle Pieces
- Challenge by Choice
- Paper Towers
- Closing Debrief

Meeting 2 (1 hour)

- Have You Ever?
- Mosquito Tag
- Minefield
- Postcard Debrief

Meeting 3 (1 hour)

- Maps of the World
- Special Friends Opener
- Jump Rope
- Special Friends Closer

Meeting 4 (1 hour)

- Hi, Lo, Yo
- Blind Polygon
- Trust Walk
- Postcard Debrief

Meeting 5 (1 hour)

- Ball Toss/Warp Speed
- River Crossing
- Letter-Writing Debrief

Challenge by Choice

“Challenge by Choice” is a philosophy used by teambuilding facilitators—the idea that each participant has ownership of his or her experience. If for any reason a participant feels uncomfortable in an activity, he/she may choose a different way to be involved with the group.

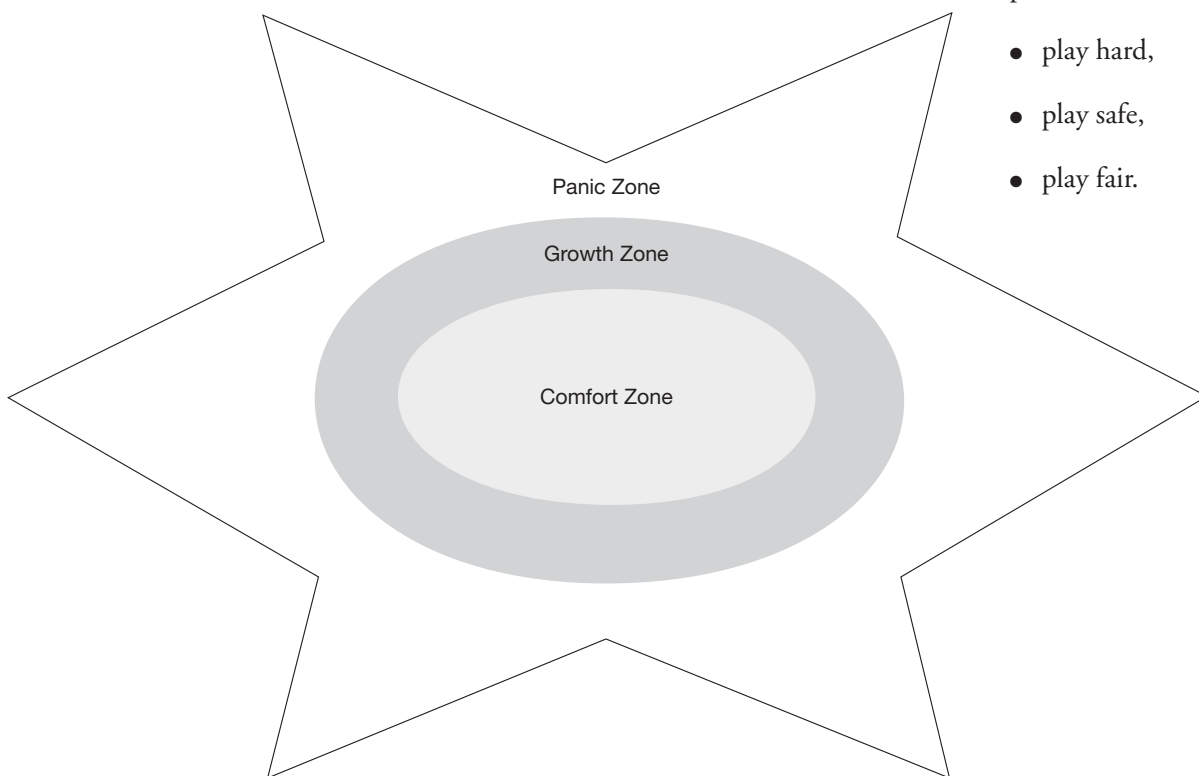
Challenge by Choice is often described using zones. The comfort zone is in the center (see diagram). As facilitator, encourage your participants to find their growth zones. This is an area where a great deal of learning occurs. When a person remains in the comfort zone, or when they are pushed too far and are in their panic zone, learning does *not* occur.

Recognize that each individual has different comfort zones. It is important that people respect other’s areas of comfort.

Activities to Support Challenge by Choice

Regardless of how long you have worked with a group, review Challenge by Choice with them. Have participants brainstorm what they think Challenge by Choice might mean. Draw the diagram below on a sheet of paper or a dry-erase board to discuss the concept.

For a more interactive discussion on Challenge by Choice, ask participants to create the different zones on the ground using a rope, tape, chalk, and so forth. As you discuss each aspect of the comfort zone, growth zone, and panic zone ask the participants to move into the various zones. Ask them for examples of how they might feel in each of the zones. To connect Challenge by Choice zones to other aspects of life, ask the participants in what zone might they find themselves in if they were: speaking in front of a large group, flying in an airplane, around snakes, rock climbing, and so on.



Full Value Contract

A “Full Value Contract” (FVC) is a set of values, norms, or ground rules that the group establishes and agrees to use for their time together. The essential points of the Full Value Contract are: to allow each member of the group to have a voice in creating group norms, to empower participants by allowing them to create the Full Value Contract, and to ensure that these values will allow the group to work toward their common goals.

The Full Value Contract asks participants to:

- fully value themselves,
- fully value the other members of the group, and
- fully value the environment—this includes the physical environment and the group environment.

Another way to look at a Full Value Contract is to simply ask your participants to:

- play hard,
- play safe,
- play fair.

Creating a Full Value Contract

4-H Full Value Contract

I pledge my *head* to clearer thinking,
my *heart* to greater loyalty,
my *hands* to larger service,
and my *health* to better living,
for my club, my community,
my country, and my world.

The 4-H pledge can be used and adapted for teambuilding programs. A facilitator can expand on the ideas that are already a part of the foundation of 4-H.

I pledge my *head* to clear group problem solving and participation,
my *heart* to caring for the other members of my group,
my *hands* to working with my other group members toward our common goals,
and my *health* toward keeping a positive atmosphere in our group.

Five-Finger Full Value Contract

The Five-Finger Full Value Contract is a quick and easy way to create group values. This tool is particularly valuable for younger groups, as well as for groups that may only be working together for a short period of time. Each finger of one hand represents various important group values.

Pinky Finger

Represents the need for us all to watch out for “the little guy/gal,” and serves as a reminder to a group to watch out for each other over the course of the program.

Ring Finger

Represents a commitment made to the group. Each person has made a commitment to do their best for the program and to support other group members.

Middle Finger

Represents the idea that a group will agree to not “discount” each other. This includes refraining from inappropriate language and respecting all members of the group.

Pointer Finger

Represents a reminder to the group to point out the positive outcomes that the group notices. This reminds individuals not to point the finger of blame on other participants

Thumb

Represents the idea that the group is going to have fun!

The Being Full Value Contract

Equipment Needs

- Large format paper (ideally large enough for a life-size being)
- Markers, crayons, paint, and so forth

The Being is a fun and interactive way to create a Full Value Contract. A simple drawing of a person can be created on a large piece of paper by tracing one of the participants. This being is a representation of the group as a whole. Participants individually contribute values that they think are important to uphold as a group. These values are added to the inside of the being. As the discussion progresses, the group members write aspects of group values that they would like to leave out of their community (for example, disrespect, hurtful words, and so on) on the outside of the being.

This is a living, working document that the participants can take with them or display in a place of importance to them. As the group members

move through their experience together, they can look back to their being to point out things that they are doing well and areas where they can continue to improve.

Hands-On Full Value Contract

Equipment Needs

- Large poster board/large sheet of paper
- Markers or crayons

This Full Value Contract is similar to The Being, but with a slightly different focus and frame. On the large sheet of paper, the participants will trace both of their hands with a marker. In one hand they will write a strength that they bring to the group (such as a great sense of humor, being a good listener, and so forth) and in the other hand they will write one thing that they need from the group (for example, support, clear communication, and so on).

The group members can use this Full Value Contract as a tool to assess how well they are able to use each other's strengths. Facilitators can ask their participants to write a variety of things in their hands depending on the group.

Building Blocks/Pyramid/Puzzles Full Value Contract

Equipment Needs

- Poster board
- Markers

This version of a Full Value Contract can be used with programs that meet over a long period of time. The concept of building blocks or a pyramid is that together the group is working on building a community

and a stronger group. As the group works together they will discover more important things to add to their community.

At different times, group members add more to the Full Value Contract. For example, introduce the base of a pyramid on the first day, as the group is just forming. The group will be creating norms to use throughout their experience together. At the mid-point of the group's time together reintroduce the contract and ask which learning experiences they would like to add, or perhaps goals that they would still like to work on. As a part of a closing experience, the capstone of the pyramid could include one positive learning activity that each person had from the group experience.

The Puzzle Piece Full Value Contract is similar to the Building Blocks or Pyramid. The facilitator incorporates the puzzle metaphor of each individual being an important piece of the group puzzle. The group can work on the puzzle at various points in time during the group process.

The idea behind these Full Value Contracts is to incorporate the thoughts of many different individuals or the progression of one group over a period of time.

The Leader's Role

The leader's role is to be a facilitator. Facilitation comes from the French word *facile*, meaning "easy." Your role as a facilitator is to make the learning process easier for your participants. You guide your participants through carefully planned activities, creating metaphors, and understanding the feelings and needs of participants.

One of the most important things for a facilitator to remember is that facilitating a group is different from instructing them. Even if you have little or no background with formally teaching a group of people, falling into an "instructor mode" during an activity can be easy. As you watch your group, you will notice things that are obvious to you about why the group is—or is not—successful. Resist the temptation to tell the group what you observed. *Your role is to lead the group into its own exploration of itself.*—In fact, you may find that the issues you felt were obvious and important don't come up at all. That's okay, as long as the group is gaining insight through its own experience.

The following are some thoughts on what makes a good leader:

- Although you challenge people; your primary goal is to help people grow in a supportive environment—help them "win."
- Everything you do should lead to an enhanced sense of self-respect and team respect; if a "mistake" or difficulty occurs, your job is to frame it as an opportunity to learn and improve.

The Experiential Learning Cycle

Many learning models describe how individuals learn through experience. Most have four distinct phases: experience, reflection, processing, applying. The Experiential Learning Cycle describes the various stages that a group or an individual goes through after an experience. As a facilitator your role is to help your participants move through this cycle to learn and gain meaning from the experience.

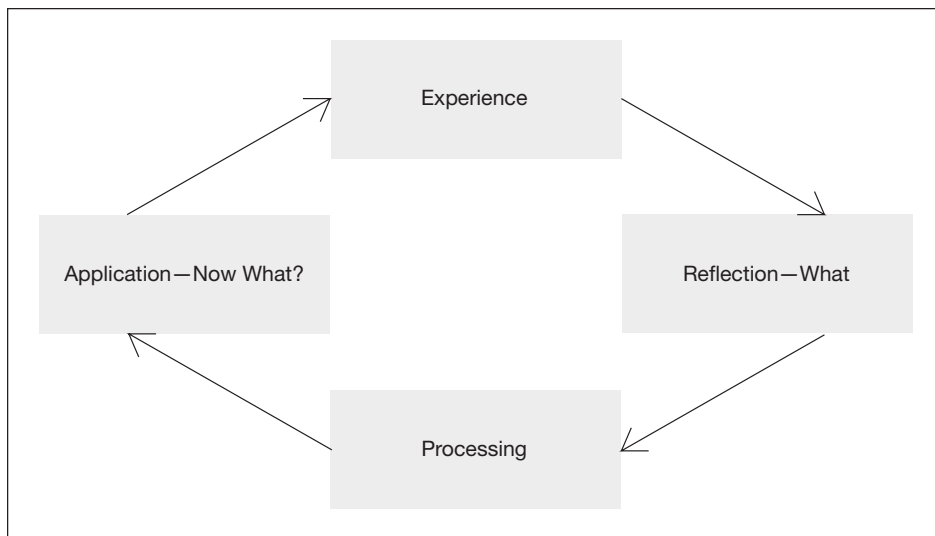
The *experience* can be anything! Experiences can be both positive and negative, but from all experiences participants have something to learn.

Reflection occurs within an individual. Facilitators can build reflection time into their programs. This is a very important aspect of the experiential cycle. Participants internalize the experiences that they had and begin to see the larger meaning of these experiences.

Processing can occur on an individual basis or as a part of a larger group. Often in a teambuilding program, processing is part of a debriefing activity. Processing helps find the meaning of the activity.

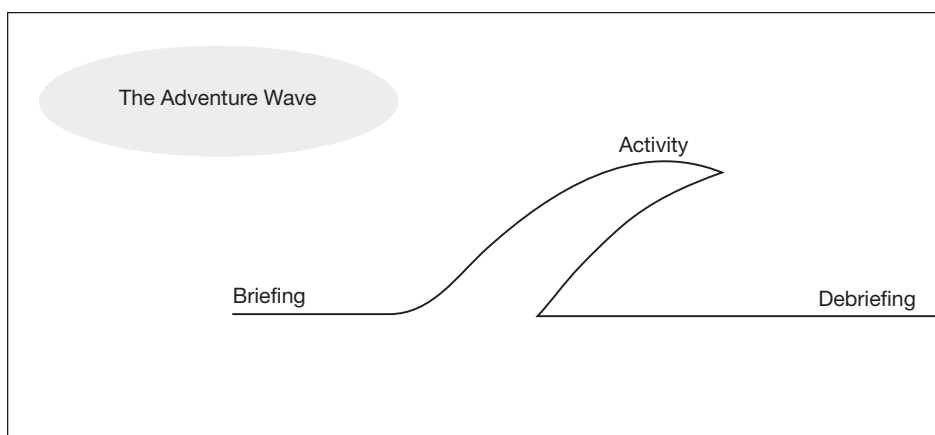
The *application* of new knowledge is a key piece to this learning model. The learnings from the experience have been distilled through reflection and processing. The participants begin to think about how they will apply what they have just learned to future experiences in their lives.

The Experiential Learning Cycle



The Adventure Wave

The Adventure Wave describes a process that facilitators want to use to give a clear briefing (introduction) to an activity or program, whether it lasts a few hours or many days. The facilitator may participate in an activity or may take on an observational role depending on the needs of the group members and where they are in their stages of group development. All activities and experiences require some debriefing, which is when the participants begin to see the learnings that can be drawn from an activity. Even a simple game of tag can have meaning to it: Did everyone have fun?



Briefing the Activities

Before you let a group begin an activity, you should give them a thorough introduction. This briefing provides the group members with the information they need in order to proceed with an activity. A good briefing sets the stage for a positive experience. Whatever the scenario, the briefing should include the following:

- **Objective**
This explanation should be as clear and concise as possible. For example, in *River Crossing* (page 48) one of the objectives is to get the entire team from one “shore” to the other without stepping in the “water.” An imaginative story line here adds a spark to the experience and helps the participants buy into the task and the guidelines. Instead of “water” the team could have to navigate a poisonous peanut butter pit or a timeline for a current project at work or school.
- **Guidelines**
The rules that govern what the group may and may not do, including an explanation of what resources are available, what the consequences are if the group doesn’t remain within the guidelines, and any additional parameters. Depending on the group members and the activity, you can allow them to set their own consequences and even to adjust the guidelines slightly to enhance their levels of participation in the process.
- **Safety Issues**
Let the group know what the safety parameters are and charge them with keeping themselves and one

another as safe as possible is important. This portion of the briefing may include specific instructions on spotting, lifting, catching, and so forth.

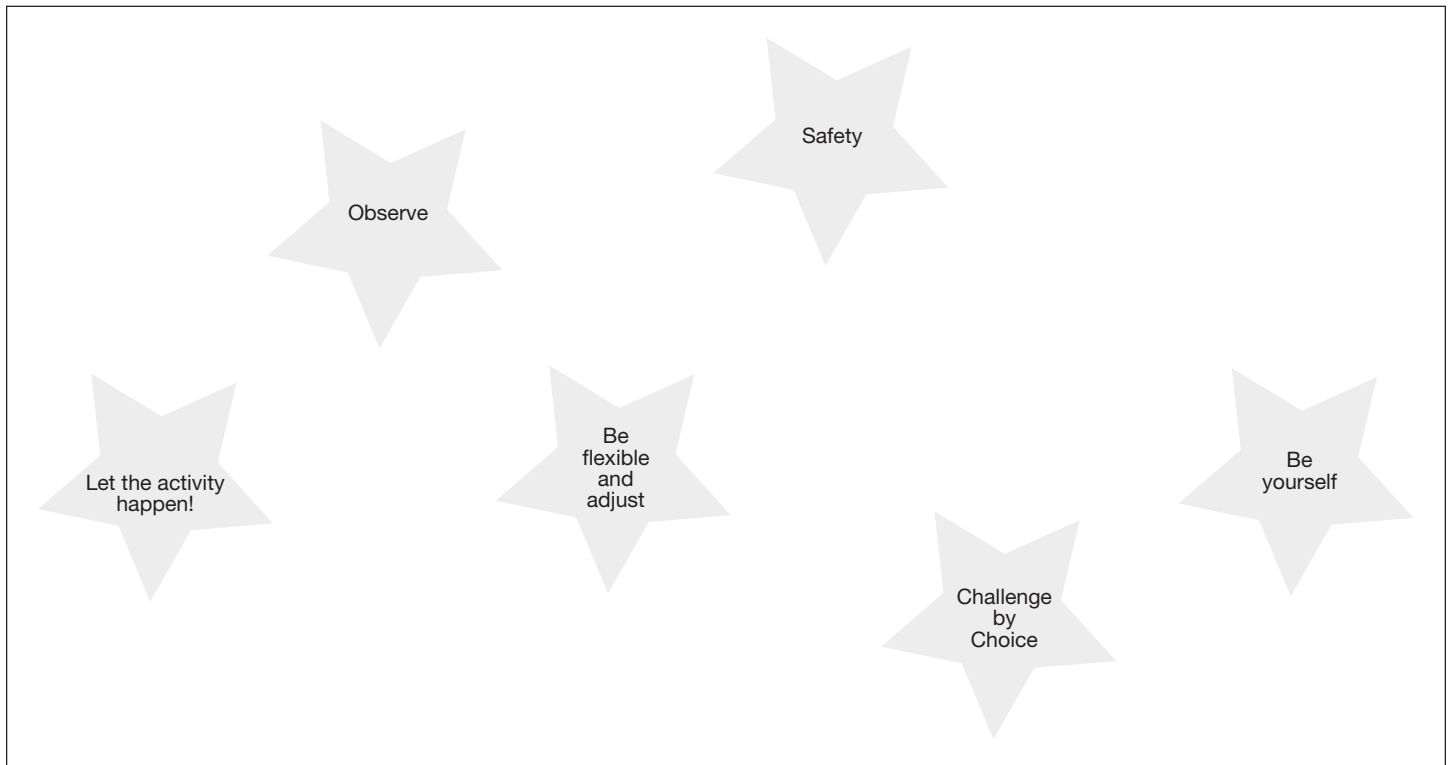
- **Clarification**
Be sure to ask for any questions so that everyone understands the guidelines and consequences.

Leading the Activities

After you provide the group with the objective, guidelines, and safety considerations, your primary role becomes that of an observer. This can be one of the most challenging parts of facilitation because it requires you to watch for the safety of the participants, ensure that they are working within the established guidelines, hold them to the consequences, and observe their interactions. In some activities, such as Ball Toss (page 36) and A What? (page 35) you will be physically involved; in others you will stand apart from the group.

Sometimes stopping the action in an activity becomes necessary. The most common reason to stop an activity is if the group has made or is trying a suggestion. In some cases, you may want to step in when the process itself is breaking down, or if the group repeatedly tries a solution that doesn't work well for them. In these cases, ask the group to stand in a circle away from the activity and process what they have been doing. What is working and what is not? Ask them to brainstorm some other considerations and to try the activity again. Do not try to solve it for them.

Guidelines for Leading



Facilitating the Debrief

After group members experience an activity, they usually need some time to reflect on what they learned and how it can be made relevant to their lives. This is often called debriefing or processing. The debrief can be a safe time where the group members consider the activities they have accomplished and the process that brought them to their accomplishment. The facilitator's confidence in the importance of the debriefing helps the process become a meaningful experience for the group. The skill is like any other and must be practiced and honored by both the facilitator and group.

Remember the following as you conduct the debrief:

- Don't be surprised by resistance.
- Connect the discussion to the group problem-solving activities.
- Train yourself to listen and observe what's happening during an activity, and use examples from the activity during the debrief.
- Sequence the debrief so that it starts easy and leads up to more difficult issues that the group faced.

Often you can turn an "instructional" comment into a "facilitative" comment by asking it as a question. Create open-ended questions rather than ones that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." For example, ask for specific examples of behaviors that led to the success of an activity. Participants become aware of how their specific actions affect the success of the team. Allow each person to share their own ideas and thoughts.

Just as a group needs to participate in icebreakers or warm-up activities before getting started with more difficult challenges, the debriefing activity has a sequence to the types of questions you should use. The debrief sequence can be broken into three parts: *What*, *So What*, and *Now What*. The first stage allows the group members to review what happened, the second stage helps them to see its relevance, and the final stage allows them to think about ways they can relate the insights back to their lives. These stages correspond to the reflection, processing, and application phases of the Experiential Learning Cycle described earlier.

The Experiential Learning Cycle can be simplified to *What*, *So What*, *Now What*.

The *What* are the experiences that the participants just had:

- What dynamics did the group observe in the activity?
- What things did the participants do well?
- What things do they still need or want to work on?
- What roles did the participants take?

So What can the group learn from this experience? How can we connect what we just did in our teambuilding activity to the work that we do together as a group? Some other "So What" questions are as follows:

- Was your role in this activity a typical role for you?
- In this activity, you said you felt _____. Do you ever feel that way at work/school/home? How do you deal with those feelings there?
- What strengths did you bring to this group activity?
- What was something you needed from the group in this activity?

The *Now What* addresses what the participants will do with their new knowledge. Questions that might be used in the "Now What" portion of a debrief are as follows:

- How can you use this learning at home/work/school? What are some obstacles to implementing what you have learned? How can you overcome these obstacles?
- What helped you accomplish your goals? What will you need from others to implement your plan elsewhere?
- If you were to develop a toolbox for school/home/work, what would be in there?
- Now that you have tackled challenges in activities, what issues will you tackle at home/work/school?

Experiential Debriefing

Teambuilding supports the notion that by actually experiencing communication, trust, support, and problem solving, people learn better than by simply discussing these issues. The same can be true during the debrief of an activity. The following are suggestions for including some more experiential ways of processing into a teambuilding activity:

- ***Dyads Processing***

At the end of the activity, ask each person to find a partner with whom they did not work during the activity. Ask them to share two or three specific observations about the activity with one another. You can do this as you move from one activity location to another. Upon arriving at your destination, ask them to share the similarities and differences about their discussions with the larger group.

- ***Postcard Debrief***

The facilitator needs to gather postcards with various pictures conveying: leadership, communication, surprise, happiness, discomfort, joy, risk taking, peer pressure, friendship, competition, sexism, and so on. Upon the completion of an activity, lay the postcards out for all the group members to see. Next, ask the participants to pick a postcard that they feel represents something that happened with the group during the previous activity or during the day. Conduct a “go around,” asking each member to tell the group why they picked up that specific card. OR Have the group come to a consensus and choose one or two cards that best

depict what happened during the activity. This should bring about a lot of discussion.

- ***Thumbs-Up***

Upon the completion of an activity, ask the group a specific question such as:

- Do you feel that the group worked together as a team?
- Do you feel that the group communicated well during this activity?
- Did you feel like you were a part of the planning process?
- Or ask questions that specifically relate to the group.

After you ask this question, the participants should answer with a thumbs-up, thumbs-to-the-side, or thumbs-down in relation to how true they feel the answer is to them individually. A discussion may take place regarding the different thumb positions—simply ask *why* they answered that way.

- ***Forced Choice***

This activity allows people to look at their roles or preferences with regard to one or more situations. In order to do the activity, first draw or make a straight line on the ground. Tell the group that you will be asking them a question (or more than one). For each question, they will need to make a choice. One side of the line will represent one option, while the other side will represent the second option. Be sure to stress that there are no right or wrong answers. This activity simply provides an opportunity to see how others felt and how they see themselves. Here are some sample questions that you may want to use:

- Do you tend to be a follower or a leader?
- In the last activity, were you a talker or a listener?
- Is it harder for you to ask for physical support or emotional support?

You can then use these choices as a springboard for further discussion.

- ***Line Continuum***

Mark two points in the dirt or on the floor about 30 feet apart (or mark a line connecting two points). Each end point represents opposite ends of the continuum. Group members should place themselves on the continuum depending on how they felt regarding individual or group characteristics of:

- Leader versus Follower
- Talker versus Listener
- Giver versus Taker
- Planned More versus Planned Less
- Safe versus Unsafe

Select any combinations that are appropriate, or make up your own. Once group members are in a straight line and, you might ask *if anyone disagrees* with this order. Let any group member who wants to change the order do so. This allows participants to rate themselves and see how others perceive them. You can also ask group members to reposition themselves according to where they would like to be on the continuum.

Discussion questions can include: How did you feel about the spot you chose for yourself? What were your feelings in lining up? How did you feel when someone moved you (if this happened)? Are there other

times you feel this way? Why did you put yourself where you did? How far apart were your positions for where you are and where you'd like to be? How do you think you could work toward getting to where you'd like to be? Keep things focused in a positive manner. Ask group members if they see any patterns in their positions.

- ***Drawing the Experience***

Ask each person to draw a picture that represents some aspect of his/her experience. Encourage creativity rather than artistic ability. Suggest that they keep the pictures simple and use symbols from the natural world to represent their experiences. Ask each person to find a partner and sit so that they can communicate but not see one another's papers. Have them describe their pictures to their partners without showing them the picture. The goal is for the other person to try to exactly duplicate their partner's picture. Have them switch roles and then discuss how close they came. This activity can help people "feel" someone else's experience through drawing what they felt. This exercise stresses the need for clear communication.

- ***Group Poem***

Ask each person in the group to come up with one word that described the group's process of completing the activity. Organize everyone's words into a list and then ask each person to write a poem or story that includes all of the words. Ask for volunteers to share their stories or poems.

- ***Object Representation***

If the project or activity involves physically building or creating something, ask each person to pick some part of the project with which they identify. Perhaps the color, size, or object itself may represent some particular obstacle that the person encountered. Ask them to describe obstacles and how they overcame them using the objects as their guides.

- ***Letter Writing***

Give each person a piece of paper and an envelope and ask them to write a letter to themselves explaining what they gained from the experience. Have them address the envelope and seal it. Collect the letters and then mail them in a few months as a reminder of the experience.

- ***Trust Statements***

You can do this activity as one large group (7–12 people) or in smaller groups (2–6 people). Give each group member a pencil and piece of paper, and ask them to complete the following sentence: "In order for me to trust a person or group, I need them to _____." After everyone is finished, have all members place their pieces of paper in the center of the group, and then ask each person to pick up one of them and read it aloud to the group. After all of the pieces of paper have been read, allow the group to discuss any or all of the ideas written down. This is a great way for people to share their true concerns without having to speak up in front of the whole group.

- ***Bull's-Eye***

Place an object, cone, or Koosh ball in the center of the circle. Ask the group members to place themselves close to or far away from the bull's-eye, depending on how they feel about an issue relating to the activity. For example: Did you take an active leadership role in this activity? If you were to answer yes, you would stand very close to the bull's-eye. If not, you might stand a bit back from the center.

- ***Picture Postcard***

For ages 10 and older. At the end of a day together, circle up and find a comfortable place to sit down. Ask each person to reflect on the experience you all shared together—you might want to do a verbal run-through of the day so the participants can replay the images in their heads as you are talking. Then, ask them to create mental postcards. What picture would you put on the card—a picture from the experience? Then, turn the card over. Realizing the limited space available, to whom would you send the card and what would you write in the space available? After giving them a minute to create the postcard, go around the circle and share (what picture, to whom it would go, and what you would tell them). Don't forget that passing is always an option! (From www.fundoing.com)

Safety

Both physical and emotional safety should be primary considerations as you conduct your teambuilding program. In creating an environment where the participants feel secure, please consider the following general guidelines:

- Emotional Safety
Introduce or review the philosophy of Challenge by Choice. This philosophy ensures that group members willingly choose to participate and challenge themselves with the expectation that their choices will be supported by the group. Anyone who does not wish to participate in a particular way can be asked to play a different role. Some alternative roles might include that of a spotter, a quality-control person who ensures that the group is sticking to the guidelines, or an observer who can report back to the group upon the completion of the activity.

Especially, when working with younger groups, establishing a Full Value Contract or “rules of conduct” for the day may be necessary. The group can initiate these; they might include an agreement to listen to one another, to avoid making derogatory comments regarding gender, body size, and so forth, and to be present and focused during the day.

- Physical Safety
Emphasize the importance of physical safety to the group. Ask group members to use behaviors that are safe for themselves and for the group, and to speak up if they are not comfortable with something another person is doing or is about to do. Part of introducing each activity should include safety guidelines for participants. The specific safety considerations for each activity are listed in the activities section of this manual.

As well as being an observer during the activity, your primary responsibility should be to ensure that the activity is conducted as safely as possible. This includes spotting all participants as they move on any elements that are above the ground. It may also involve clarifying the rules regarding jumping, throwing, and so on.

Spotting

Spotting is a technique that can help protect participants from serious injury should they fall during an activity. The primary purpose is to protect the important parts of the body (head, neck, shoulders, and back) from contact with the ground or any solid object if a fall would occur. The purpose is to support, *not catch*, the participant. If a participant falls, the spotters reach for the torso, brace themselves, and as gently as possible support the head, neck, shoulders, and back.

Modeling the proper spotting techniques as you explain them to the group is important. Be sure to emphasize that the group members should take responsibility for spotting one another and keeping one another as safe as possible. The following are some general guidelines for spotting during most activities:

- Arms raised to meet the middle section (torso) of the person being spotted.
- Feet should be at shoulders' width apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other, knees slightly bent.
- Hands may be closed loosely to prevent fingers from being bent or injured.
- If the distance between the spotters and the participant is small, the hands may remain open with the thumb held close to the palm.
- Eyes should be watching the participant at all times.

Chapter 3:

Teambuilding Activities

Large

Group

Warm-Ups

Partner Swap

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

Partner Swap is a great activity to do at the beginning of a teambuilding program. This fun and straightforward activity introduces the concepts of teamwork, trust, communication, and thinking creatively. You can do this activity with small groups as well as very large groups. The goal of this activity is to simply switch places with a partner in as many different and creative ways as possible in 30 seconds to one minute.

Equipment Needs

None

Briefing the Activity/ Guidelines

Ask the participants to choose a partner—someone who is standing next to them or someone they do not know very well.

- Illustrate with your partner how the pairs might switch places. You and your partner will just walk around each other to switch places. The pairs may not use this way of switching places.
- Instruct the participants that they have between 30 seconds and one minute to switch places with their partners in as many different and creative ways as possible.
- After the allotted time has passed, ask the participants to spend about 10 seconds discussing their favorite ways to switch places with their partners.
- Quickly whip around the circle allowing each partnership to share their favorite way of switching places.

Quick Debrief

- In this quick debrief, ask the group members what it took to switch places with their partners.
- Many of the responses will include communication, teamwork/working together, trust, thinking out of the box or thinking creatively, trying something new, and so on.
- Highlight that these are just some of the concepts that they will be working on while doing team-building activities.
- Encourage the participants to understand that many of the activities they will be involved with during the teambuilding program have meaning behind them. Even a simple activity such as being asked to switch places with a partner has meaning behind it.

Gotcha!

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

When you have a few extra minutes to spend with the small group as well as very large groups, Gotcha! is a fun way to maintain your participants' interest and keep them focused on a positive, constructive, and—most importantly—fun activity!

Equipment Needs

A nimble mind and quick fingers

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- With the participants standing in a circle, instruct them to put their left hands out with the flats of their palms facing up toward the sky. This hand should be placed about navel-level and to their sides, more or less in front of his/her left-hand neighbor.
- Once everyone has their hands palm-up and out to their left, ask them to point the first fingers of their right hands up into the sky.
- Here's where things get a bit tricky. Ask the participants to put their right pointer fingers down in to the open palms of their right-hand neighbors.
- In other words, all participants will have their left hands out with the pointer fingers of their left-hand neighbors in them. And all participants will have their right pointer fingers tip down in to the palms of their right-hand neighbors.

- On the facilitator's count of "1, 2, 3, Gotcha!" the participants will try to do two things at the same time: (1) their left hands will be attempting to grab the pointer fingers of their neighbors' right hands while (2) their right fingers will be attempting to escape the clutches of their neighbors' left hands.

Variations

- Instead of "1, 2, 3, Gotcha!" try telling a story using three buzz words such as *challenge*, *trust*, or *teamwork*. On these words the participants will attempt to do "gotcha!"
- Vary the people who do the countdown.
- Vary the number sequence (for example, "1, 5, 7, 10, Gotcha!").

Incorporations

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity promotes interaction and laughter for large groups and consists of participants incorporating themselves into groups according to some category stated by the facilitator. Once all of the participants have formed smaller groups according to the stated category, the group celebrates their uniqueness and the diversity of the larger group.

Equipment Needs

None

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Explain to the larger group that in a moment they will be dividing into smaller groups according to some commonality. For example “Divide yourselves into groups according to your favorite season!” At this time, all the people who enjoy summer get into a group, winter lovers do the same, and so on.
- Begin with easy categories (groups of four, six, by seasons, color of shirts) and progress to more difficult categories (one’s requiring more communication) like favorite pizza topping or outdoor activity.
- The facilitator should emphasize that the groups be distinct and separate from one another so they can be easily identified.

- Once groups are formed, the facilitator points to each group and asks them to shout in unison what group they have formed. If another group has the same category, have the two groups merge and celebrate together.
- After all groups have been identified, the facilitator shouts out another type of division.
- Lots of enthusiasm from the facilitator makes this activity high energy and fun.
- Some other suggestions for incorporations: eye color, hair color, color of shirt, state where born, favorite after school/work activity, favorite section of the newspaper, favorite flavor of ice cream, favorite pizza topping, favorite sport. A good final incorporation is by birth month; when the groups have formed, have them do the birthday wave. January begins by yelling out their month followed immediately by February, and so forth.

Have You Ever?

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity offers an opportunity for participants to learn more about one another. One person in the middle of a circle asks the other participants a question in the form of “Have you ever . . . ?” If the question applies to a participant, he/she should move to a new spot in the circle.

Equipment Needs

One object for each participant to mark their “spots” in the circle (carpet squares, pieces of wood, rings, chairs, and so on)

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask the participants to form a large circle around the facilitator.
- Give each person an object to stand on to mark their spots in the circle. Or to save time, you can arrange the objects in a circle prior to the arrival of the group. You can also use a circle of chairs.
- The facilitator explains that he/she will be asking a question that is true for him/her in the form of “Have you ever . . . ?” If this question applies to someone in the circle, that person must find a new, unoccupied spot to stand. You should emphasize that each person should go *across* the circle to find a new spot; discourage them from moving to a spot right next to them or back to their starting positions.
- The first few questions should be something that is true for most of

the participants. Some examples:
Have you ever flown in an airplane?
Been out of the country (Canada counts!)? Won an award or prize?

- The facilitator should initiate three or four “Have you ever . . . ?” questions. When the group has a good idea of how the game is played, the facilitator can find a place to stand in the circle. This will result in a participant being stuck in the middle. This participant must then ask a “Have you ever . . . ?” question. Remind him/her that the question he/she asks must be true for him/her.
- This activity can continue as long as it is still fun for those participating or until time becomes a limiting factor.
- Some other questions you might try: Have you ever been in a parade? Performed CPR in an attempted life-saving situation? Written a letter to the editor? Been to a high school reunion after 20 years? Stayed up all night studying/working? For even more great ideas see pages 142–156 in *Bottomless Bag* by Karl Rohnke (Kendall/Hunt, 1994).

What to Look For

- If participants ask personal or offensive questions, encourage them to get back to appropriate questions.
- When you sense that people have begun to get bored, end up in the middle on purpose and then congratulate them on their participation.

Safety

- Once participants realize that they might end up in the middle, they will probably start to run and push in order to find an unoccupied spot. For safety reasons, this should be strongly discouraged. If running or pushing does occur, require that they walk across the circle.

Wobble, Wobble

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This wild and crazy variation of the old game Rock, Paper, Scissors encourages participants to become comfortable with one another by allowing them to look silly and have fun together. The “winners” of each session evolve through several stages, from an egg to an ultra being.

Equipment Needs

A lot of eager and enthusiastic participants

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- The facilitator should review the rules of Rock, Paper, Scissors with the group, just in case some participants don’t know this old favorite. There are three hand motions: “rock” is represented by a closed fist, “paper” by an open hand, and “scissors” by using your index and middle fingers form a “V.” On the count of three, each person displays one of these three hand gestures. To determine who wins, use the following: rock beats scissors, scissors cuts paper, and paper covers rock. If there is a tie, have them shoot again—that’s rock, paper, scissors!!
- Enthusiastically demonstrating the activity as you explain the rules is important. People are generally leery of trying it at first, but usually jump right in when they see the facilitator having so much fun!

- Everyone in the group begins in a crouched “egg position.” The sound that eggs make is a high-pitched “wobble, wobble, wobble.”
- The eggs wobble around and find another egg to compete in Rock, Paper, Scissors. The winner of the shoot-out becomes a chicken; the loser stays an egg. Chickens stand up, flap their wings, and make chicken sounds. Chickens compete with other chickens in the shoot-out. The winner of the chicken shoot-out becomes a dinosaur; the loser goes back to being an egg. The dinosaurs walk around growling with their arms over their heads and compete in the shoot-out with other dinosaurs. The winner of the dinosaur shoot-out becomes an ultra being; the loser goes back to the chicken stage. The ultra beings move to the sidelines and cheer on the other competitors.
- The shoot-outs continue, eggs with eggs, chickens with chickens, and so on; winners advancing, losers digressing until all that are left are one egg, one chicken, one dinosaur, and many ultra beings.
- Review once more the order: eggs become chickens, chickens become dinosaurs, and dinosaurs become ultra beings.

Debrief Issues

- Competition: Win/win versus win/lose philosophy
- Inclusion: Importance of inclusion at all stages of an activity/project. For example in a workplace there may be older people (dinosaurs) and younger people (eggs). How can these two groups work well together? What problems may arise and why?

Who Am I?

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This fun icebreaker works well with big or small groups. Every participant has a sticker with a person or character’s name placed on his/her back. The participant is not told who the person or character is on his or her back. Instead, the participant must mingle with other participants and ask “yes” or “no” questions as he/she tries to determine “Who am I?”

Equipment Needs

Label stickers that are pre-written with the name of a person or character. The person or character should be within a category and a person that everybody knows: actors, cartoon characters, super heroes, athletes, and so forth.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

This activity is more difficult than it seems. So, keep the characters simple.

- Place the stickers on participants’ backs.
- Tell the participants that they are “cartoon characters” or whatever category you have chosen.
- Do not allow anyone to outright tell the participants “who they are.”
- Participants may ask up to two “yes” or “no” questions at a time to a single person as they try to guess who they are.
- After one or two questions, participants must then ask another person a question.

- Everyone must be mingling as they try to figure out who they are.
- Once participants finally figure out who they are, they can put their stickers on their front sides and continue to answer other's "yes" or "no" questions.
- Some people may get stuck and need some help. As time runs out, you may allow them to ask more specific questions.

Example

- Leader places the name "Donald Duck" on my back and tells me that I am a cartoon character.
- I go up to the first person I see and ask, "Am I a monster?"
- The person says, "No."
- I ask the same person, "Am I a cat?"
- The person says, "No."
- I then approach another person and ask, "Am I an animal?"
- The person says, "No," because I am a bird.
- I then ask another question until I figure out who I am.

Fun with Trash Balls

Description

Big Group: 15+
Indoor or Outdoor

This interactive series of activities help participants learn one another's names while encouraging fun and laughter. Watch out because trash balls will be flying in all directions, keeping all participants on their toes!

Equipment Needs

- Trash balls and trash boulders—you can construct trash balls and boulders using newspaper, plastic grocery bags, and tape. For trash balls, wad up newspaper to make a basketball-sized ball. Then stuff the newspaper into a plastic bag and use tape to hold the ball together. A trash boulder is simply a trash ball about three times larger than a regular trash ball. For trash boulders, you will need larger plastic bags.
- You should have enough trash balls or boulders on hand so that there is at least one for every two people.
- If you do not have enough time to make trash balls/boulders, any soft objects can be used.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- This activity works best with groups of 15 or more because there is more opportunity for interaction and movement.
- Have the large group divide into equal-sized circles of about 8–12 participants. Toss one ball to each circle.

Level I

- Have the person with the ball start by saying his/her name loud and clear. Then ask him/her to toss the ball to someone else in the circle. When the ball is caught, the catcher should say his/her name loud and clear. Have the participants continue tossing the ball and saying their own names until everyone has had a chance to hear the names at least twice.
- Continue with the ball toss—only this time have the entire group yell out the name of the person catching the ball. Allow this to continue until it seems that all participants are actively involved in the exclamation of names. If you're doing this in an inside space, be prepared to plug your ears because the room gets pretty loud.
- Finally, it's time to test how many names each person remembers! Before throwing the ball, the thrower must say the name of the person *to whom they're throwing*.
- Add more balls to each circle until there is one ball for every two people. Participants will be getting hit with balls from all angles, there will be a lot of laughter, and chances are it will be very loud—these are all normal observations.

Level II

- The fun begins now! Participants continue saying the names of the people they are throwing to, but now there are commands that affect how the participants will toss the balls. The commands are *cross over*, *switch back*, and *scatter*. Introduce these commands one at a time to give each person and the group the chance to practice.
- When they hear “cross over,” all participants *holding a ball* should cross to the other side of their *own* circle and then continue throwing the balls while saying names.
- When they hear “switch back,” all participants *holding a ball* should move from their circle to a spot in the *other* circle and then continue throwing the balls while saying names. Since this is their first opportunity to mix with a new group, encourage them to ask the names of the new people. Give them some time to learn these new names before calling another command.
- When they hear “scatter,” all participants should scatter throughout the room and continue throwing the balls to anyone while saying names. People must, however, stay where they are standing. This is a blast! By this time everyone should know one another’s names.

Level III

- The next sequence is slightly more complex and involves some concentration and coordination by all participants. To begin, give each circle one trash ball. By tossing the trash ball they should establish a pattern so that all participants in the circle catch the ball once. Tell them that you will be referring to this sequence as “sequence I” and that it’s important that they remember to whom they toss the ball and from whom they receive the ball.
- To start, have everyone put their hands up ready to catch the ball. As each person catches the ball, have them lower their hands so that it is obvious who has not yet caught the ball. The sequence should begin and end with the same person. Encourage them to continue using names of the people they toss the ball to as they toss the ball.
- Have the participants practice this sequence a few times. After you’re sure they have it, add more trash balls that have to be tossed in the same sequence to each circle until there is about one ball for every two people.
- Ask each circle to put down all trash balls except one. Tell them that they will now be creating a new sequence but that they should still remember the original one. You will be referring to this new sequence as “sequence II.” As with sequence I, remembering to whom they toss the ball and from whom they receive it in this new sequence is important.

- Have them start this second sequence with a different person so that differentiating it from the first is easier. Repeat the steps listed above until all participants are comfortable with sequence II using multiple trash balls. Again, emphasize the importance of remembering to whom they toss the ball and from whom they receive it.
- To make sure they really have the sequences down, have each circle show you their sequence I and sequence II patterns with one trash ball.
- Participants should now have two sequences memorized. Now it’s time to confuse them! Explain that you’ll be introducing some commands as they toss the ball. The commands are *sequence I*, *sequence II*, and *cross over*.
- When they hear “sequence I” or “sequence II” they should go immediately into that new sequence starting with the person who has the ball when the command is said.
- Add some trash balls now until there is one ball for every two people.
- Now you can reintroduce the “cross over” command from before. When they hear that command, anyone *holding a trash ball* should move across *their own circles* and continue with whatever sequence was being used.
- Play around with calling out “sequence I,” “sequence II,” and “cross over.” As long as people are having fun, you might try throwing in a “reverse,” or be creative and make up your own commands!

Chaos!

Description

Big Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This interactive game allows for lots of people to interact within small teams all at once—hence “Chaos!” Chaos can be done with any amount of people, but it’s best to have at least 30. The large group needs to be divided into smaller teams of 6–10 people. Once the smaller teams are established, each will be given a piece of paper with several commands listed. During the activity, each of the small groups will be doing one of the commands at different times, providing for true chaos, lots of laughter, and fun.

Equipment Needs

Enough lists with descriptions of commands for each small group

Examples for lists:

1. Choose your favorite holiday song and sing this loudly to the whole group.
2. Without speaking, arrange yourselves by order of your birthday—month and day only (do not include the year). When you are done, sing “Happy Birthday” (LOUDLY) to the person who has the closest birthday to today.
3. Work together to attach a clothespin to a member of another group without that person knowing. If you have more time, try to attach another clothespin to a different person.

4. Share with your group members a hero that you have and why that person is a hero to you.
5. If you could have a conversation with anyone in the world throughout all of history, who would it be and why? Please share your answers with the members of your small group.
6. Who has the oldest living relative in your group? The youngest? Who has traveled the farthest? Who has the smallest shoe size? The largest? What other fun things can you share about yourselves?
7. Within your group agree on a favorite dessert (ice cream, apple pie, brownies, and so on) and then announce this loudly to the whole group (example: “We LOVE chocolate mousse!”). Repeat for your favorite season and your favorite free-time activity.
8. Planes, trains, and automobiles! Decide which mode of travel your group as a whole prefers most. Using all your group members, demonstrate this mode of travel in and around the other groups.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Divide the large group up into smaller groups of 6–10 people.
- Pass out a piece of paper with the guidelines listed for each command.
- Instruct the groups that the leader will be calling out a number. Once they hear the number, each small team must do the action listed under that number on their instruction sheets.

Small

Group

Warm-Ups

Partner Tag

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

Everybody grab a partner! This activity is a great one to play with any size group. Each participant is trying to tag his/her partner. Once the tag has taken place, partners switch roles.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

Establish a boundary free of obstacles and large enough to allow easy movement by all participants in the group.

- Have each participant find a partner; if there is an odd number the facilitator gets to play. Yippee!
- Have participants decide who will be “It” first. To start, the people who are “It” make a 360-degree turn and then pursue their partners. Once they tag their partners, their partners will make a 360-degree turn and become “It.” This continues until the energy level goes down or time becomes a limiting factor.
- You may wish to stop the game after a few minutes and have participants pick new partners. Then play again!
- If participants go outside the boundary, they are automatically considered tagged and become “It.”

Variations

- If the boundary area is small or if you question whether the group can keep one another safe, require that everyone walk rather than run to tag their partners.

Safety

- Tags should be made below the armpits. No head shots!
- Make sure the playing area is free of obstacles.
- Caution participants to be careful when they are running. People will be moving fast in all directions and collisions are possible.

Maps of the World

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

Maps of the World is a great activity to help people get to know one another as they hear about each other's dreams or experiences in specific places around the United States or even the world. This activity involves creating a "map" on the floor or ground using a long rope or tape. Having the facilitator create an outline of the United States on the floor/ground large enough for the whole group to stand inside is easiest. Of course, people may also stand outside in other countries as well—though they may be imaginary because the outline has not been created.

Equipment Needs

- A long rope or masking tape
- Open floor space or open area outside

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Explain to the group that the shape on the floor is the United States.
- Ask the group a question. For example: Where do you want to go to college?
- The participants should then decide where they would like to go to college and physically stand there. For example, if I wanted to go to Penn State, I would find where I think Pennsylvania is on the map and then stand where I think State College might be. (Many people might not have good geography skills. That's okay; tell them to guess or ask somebody.)
- Now that everyone is standing in a location, the facilitator should ask each person where they are and why they want to go to school there.
- One at a time, group members will share this information with the group.

Variations

- Ask two or three questions to lengthen the activity and learn more about the group members.

Question Ideas

- If you could go anywhere on your dream vacation, where would you go?
- Where is one of the coolest places you've ever been?
- What is your family's ethnic origin?

Swat Tag/Mosquito Tag

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This tag game is a great energizer that can get the whole group interacting and having fun together. Be very, very, careful because the mosquitoes that dwell in the woods are on the prowl. If stung, your body will become rock solid!

Equipment Needs

- Open space free of obstacles
- Foam "boppers" like a swimming pool noodle or some other soft, flexible tubing such as pipe insulators

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- The facilitator should create an interesting story describing the tale behind the giant mosquitoes in Pennsylvania.
- One or two participants (more for a large group) will be mosquitoes during the activity and be equipped with foam boppers (proboscis).
- The remaining participants try to avoid the sting (tag) of the giant mosquitoes. As participants are stung (tagged by a foam bopper), they must stand in the spot where they were tagged until freed by untagged participants.
- Tagged participants can be freed by untagged participants when two

untagged participants clasp hands around the tagged participant. When they are joined around the tagged individual, they must jump up and down three times while repeating the words “mosquitoes don’t exist” three times. At this time the tagged participant has been saved and can try to avoid the deadly sting of the mosquito again.

- Before beginning the game, set boundaries appropriate for the size of the group. For fewer participants use only one mosquito (bopper). For larger groups (greater than 25), you may wish to have two participants carry boppers.
- The game can continue as long as it still appears fun. You will have to begin again if the mosquitoes are successful in stinging (tagging) all participants. Also, you may wish to change mosquitoes during the game to give others opportunities to chase and tag.
- If participants run out of the established boundary, they automatically become “frozen.”

Safety

- Make all participants aware of the hazards in the boundaries such as rocks, trees, stumps, gardens, telephone poles, and so on.
- Emphasize that all tags should be made below the armpits. No head shots!

Add-On Tag

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This high-action thriller is sure to be a hit with any group. In this activity you will observe people chasing, being chased, and bopping (below the armpits of course). It is a great activity to start the day by getting everyone warmed up and having fun.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Establish a boundary free of obstacles.
- To begin, have two people volunteer to be “It.” They will clasp hands, and in their free hands they will carry boppers. They will use the boppers to tag other participants who are scattered within the boundary.
- Once tagged, the participant must join the two chasers by clasping hands with one of them and taking the bopper. The three can then run around and attempt to bop other participants. This bopping continues until most participants have been tagged and a long chain of people has formed.
- If participants run out of the boundary or attempt to run through the middle of the chain, they automatically are caught and must “add on” to the chain.
- The chain must be all connected for the tag to count.

Variations

- You may wish to have three permanent boundaries and one mobile boundary (the facilitator can be the fourth boundary). This way, if the beginning chain is slow and having a hard time tagging, you can move in and make the playing space smaller. As the chain grows, you can move out to expand the field.

Safety

- Be very observant to how the chain of boppers maneuvers around the playing area. Some people may run fast and drag others behind them. The chain may take a quick turn creating a “whip effect” at the end. When the chain gets longer, the two ends may decide to go in opposite directions; this could cause some problems for those in the middle of the chain. If you see a potentially dangerous situation, stop the activity immediately.
- Do not allow participants to run through the middle of the chain to avoid being tagged!
- Make sure the playing area is free of all obstacles.
- Emphasize that all bopping should take place below the armpits. No head shots!

Adventure Name Game

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

Need a fun activity to learn names? This activity is great—very active and incorporates a lot of individual creativity.

Equipment Needs

An open and flat surface

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- To begin, have the group form a loose circle.
- Ask each person to think of a word and action that describes some adventure activity that they enjoy.
- Have a participant volunteer to start and ask him/her to demonstrate by saying his/her adventure word followed by his/her name. For example, if someone enjoys running, he might run in place while saying, “Running Mike.” The entire group then repeats both the action and the name. As the facilitator, you will have to encourage this in the beginning.
- Continue around the circle, having the person to the left go next. After they share their actions and names, the group begins by saying and doing the first person’s adventure name followed by the second person’s adventure name. This continues until all participants have had an opportunity to share their adventure names and actions.
- As a facilitator, many will look to you for leadership and help with the names.

Variations

- After everyone has a turn, point to a person in the circle and have everyone demonstrate his or her adventure name.
- You may want to take out the adventure part and have them simply share an action for some thing they like to do such as shopping, cooking, fixing cars, and so forth.

What to Look For

- If you do this activity at the beginning, you will have the opportunity to assess your group. You should be able to see things such as who the risk takers are, who the followers are, who the comedian is, and so on.

Safety

- Some people may incorporate very vigorous actions into their adventure names. Caution those who may not be able to mimic these actions.
- Emphasize that the actions people choose should be appropriate so that all participants can do them. For example, no back flips.

Hi, Lo, Yo

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This game is fun, interactive, and has lots of laughs. It can be a great energizer between activities or useful if you are waiting for another group. Participants stand in a circle and use hand motions, while verbally continuing the sequence “Hi, Lo, Yo, Hi, Lo, Yo” and so on.

Equipment Needs

An open and flat surface

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Explain to the group that each participant will be responsible for continuing the Hi, Lo, Yo verbal sequence throughout the course of the activity. Each word has a corresponding hand motion. For “Hi,” participants place either their left or right hands flat open under their chins. For “Low,” participants place either their left or right hands flat open across their foreheads. For “Yo,” participants put their two hands together and point to another participant in the circle. Have all participants practice the sequence with hand motions, following the facilitator’s lead.
- Next, explain that using the hand motions, the participants in the circle will continue the sequence. Start with one person, that person will say, “Hi,” with the corresponding hand motion. The hand that the person uses will determine the direction the sequence will continue. For example, if the first

person uses his/her right hand, his/her fingers will be pointing to the left; therefore, the sequence will continue to the left and that person will say, “Lo,” with the corresponding hand motion. If this participant uses his/her left hand, fingers will be pointing to the right and the sequence will continue to the right.

- The game of “Hi, Lo, Yo” is intended to be fast moving—so encourage participants to continue the sequence as fast as possible. This can create confusion. If a participant hesitates, uses the wrong hand motion, yells out the wrong word in the sequence, or is just too darn slow, all participants in the circle stick out their thumbs (like hitch hikers) and yell, “You’re outta here!” As with all activities, everyone should be involved for the duration of the game. Those “ejected” from the playing circle have a very important role: they become “hecklers.” The heckler’s duty is to move around the outside of the playing circle while attempting to disrupt the sequence and mess up others.
- Continue playing until only two or three people remain in the playing circle, leaving the remainder of the people on the outside creating a lot of chaos. Then start over or come back to the activity later in the day to pep up the group. Have fun!

What to Look For

- Participants may be confused on how the use of the right or the left hand determines the direction of the sequence.
- Hecklers might not do their job. Instead they may huddle together and just watch. They should be encouraged to make some noise—this is the best part of the game.

Safety

- Encourage people not to yell too loudly, especially into each other’s ears.

Debrief Issues

- Communication:
What were the barriers? How did the hecklers disturb the sequence?
- Fun:
What is the purpose and need for fun and laughter?
- Cooperation:
How do the hecklers affect the activity? What type of distractions do you have at school or work?

Interview

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

You can use this activity to acquaint members of a newly formed group or help an intact group learn more about one another. All participants interview their partners using their own questions or ones that the facilitator assigns. After the interview process, each person is introduced to the group by his/her partner. By learning more about one another, the group becomes familiar with each other, thus establishing trust.

Equipment Needs

Paper and pencil, but it can be done without

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask people to pair up with another person in the group whom they don’t know very well. If the group has an odd number of people, you should partner with someone in the group.
- Ask each person to develop two interview questions that they’d like to ask their partners. The questions can deal with anything about that person, but shouldn’t be too personal. Encourage them to be creative in designing their questions.
- Make sure that you tell the participants that their answers will be disclosed to the entire group.

- The following are some sample questions you might want to suggest:
 - What do you want to be most remembered for?
 - What is your proudest accomplishment?
 - If you could be any animal, what would it be and why?
 - What person, not related to you, has had the most influence on your life? How?
 - Make up a book title to describe your life. Why did you choose this?
 - How would your best friend describe you?
 - What was your most embarrassing moment?
 - If you could go anywhere in the world without worrying about time or money, where would you go? Why?
 - If you could invite anyone to dinner, who would it be? Why?
 - What is your earliest memory?
 - Who would you pick to play your life in a movie? Why?
 - While walking to your next activity, have the pairs conduct their interviews. At the halfway point, ask them to switch and ask the other person their questions.
- Have the group sit in a circle. Ask for a volunteer to start, or you could simply go around the circle. Ask them to introduce their partners by saying their partner's name and some of the information that they found out during the interview.
- As a facilitator, this is a good time for you to memorize the names of the participants in your group. You may even want to unobtrusively write down their names for future reference.

Variations

- Give each pair a ring or aerobe to throw to one another as a way to move down the trail. Encourage them to toss the ring so it encircles the hands and arms of their partners. They can only move forward to catch the ring from their partner.
- If there are specific things that you think the group would benefit from knowing, you may want to set one or two of the interview questions yourself. For example:
 - What career are you interested in pursuing?
 - What organizations do you belong to and why did you join?
- If they know one another, ask them to share one thing that they don't think anyone in the group knows about them.
- Another option for a group that knows one another well is to ask them to introduce one another without first doing an interview. Have the group form a circle. Ask someone to start by introducing another person in the circle. Have him/her say the name of the person and as much information as he/she knows about them. The person who was introduced goes next. As the activity continues, the tension mounts since the least-known members are usually last. Allow the interviewees to correct any misinformation or add more facts if they want. Finding out how little we know about people we spend lots of time with is amazing.

What to Look For

- Some people have better memories than others. After the interviewers share their information, allow the interviewees to add or correct any information that has been shared.
- Some participants, especially younger ones, may have a hard time sitting still and being quiet during the sharing. Remind them that while someone is sharing, everyone needs to listen.

Safety

- People may disclose personal information in their interviews without realizing that it will be shared with the entire group. Be sure to stress at the beginning that what they discuss with their partners will be shared unless they ask otherwise.
- Watch out for the emotional safety of people as they are introduced. If someone shares something personal and you sense that the interviewee is uncomfortable with having that information disclosed, check in with the interviewee and ask if he/she would prefer that we move on.

Debrief Issue

- Trust: Comfort in disclosing personal information about oneself to the group.

People Bingo

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity is great for getting people to mingle with one another. Each member of the group should receive a “bingo card.” In each square of the grid is a simple question or statement. The card holder must mingle around with group members and find a person for whom the statement is true or a person who is able to answer the question. The goal is to complete the entire card.

Equipment Needs

You can create the bingo cards on scrap paper or you can type up and print them (see appendix for an example). Create questions that you think are appropriate for the age group. Each person should get a card and a pen or pencil.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Create the bingo cards in advance. Be sure to have one for each participant. Questions cards can be the same or varied with different questions. For example, has a unique scar, has been to Disney World, has run in a race, loves the color purple, has more than two siblings, likes to draw.
- As the participants find people who can answer the questions, they must get that person to put his/her signature or initials in the box.
- The participants should mingle until their cards are complete. Ensuring that most people have their cards complete—as opposed to turning it into a competition—is best.
- You may set up guidelines such as “you may only have one person’s signature a total of two times.” This guideline keeps participants from hanging out with only one or two people the entire time. Create guidelines based on group size.
- You may also decide whether you want participants to complete their entire cards or just five squares in a row—like BINGO.

Debriefing

- When the activity is complete, get the group to stand in a circle and share one or two interesting things they might have learned about somebody through this activity.

Special Friend

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity brings closure to the day by allowing members to share their observations of the positive qualities and contributions of their team members. Each person observes one other person throughout the day and then shares these observations as the last activity.

Equipment Needs

Small slips of paper and a pencil for each participant

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Give each person a slip of paper and pencil.
- Ask them to write their first names (and last names if there are duplicate first names) on the paper and fold it in half.
- Collect the paper and pencils. You may want to ask for someone to volunteer a hat for collecting the papers.
- Walk around and have each person pick a name from the hat, keeping the identity of the person they choose a secret.
- If someone picks his/her own name, have them replace it and pick again.
- Tell the group that you are going to give them the opportunity to observe the positive contributions that their teammates make during the day. The idea of being watched makes people nervous, so remind

them to only observe activity-related things, not how they ate lunch. Ask them to notice specific ways that their “special friends” helped the group accomplish its goals. Emphasize that this is an attempt to “put up” rather than “put down” people, so you want them to look for only positive contributions.

- At the end of the day, allow for at least 15 minutes to go around the circle asking for each member to share observations of their special friends.
- You can ask for a volunteer to go first and then allow his/her special friend to go next, thereby having the sharing process facilitate who goes next.

Variations

- Including yourself in the Special Friends activity gives you the opportunity to share first, thus setting the stage for the types of comments you’d like them to share.
- Not including yourself allows members of the group to hear from one another rather than from someone who is not in their intact team.
- Allow the people to share their observations first and then reveal their special friends or vice versa. You may also ask the group to guess whom the person is describing.
- Celebrate and acknowledge each person who has been “put up” by thanking them for their effort.

What to Look For

- Ensure that throughout the day, people keep the names of their special friends a secret.
- If the group doesn’t know one another well, go around the circle and have everyone say their names once more so everyone can be sure of whom they should observe.

Level I

Activities

Inner Tube Pass (Circle the Circle)

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity physically connects a group. The goal is to pass a hoop or tube around a circle without breaking the hand-in-hand chain.

Equipment Needs

- 2 hula hoops of different sizes
- A bicycle inner tube

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask the group to form a hand-in-hand circle.
- Place two large hoops between two people (resting on their grasped hands).
- Tell the group that their goal is to move the hoops, in opposite directions, around the circle.
- The group cannot break the hand-in-hand circle during the activity.
- Pretty quickly, people will figure out that in order to pass the hoops they will need to climb through them and then help their partners do the same.
- Keep encouraging the participants while the hoops are passed. Then celebrate the team's success once the hoops are back to their starting places.

Variations

- You can also do this activity for a timed record.
- After the team successfully rotates two large hoops, try it with two smaller ones or try a bicycle inner tube for an even bigger challenge.

What to Look For

- If you didn't give them any hints on how to solve the activity, you'll probably initially observe a lot of questioning about how it's even possible to do. Fairly quickly someone gets the idea and the team is off and doing the activity.
- People will laugh a lot as they squirm and wiggle through the hoops.
- Some people may feel a bit nervous regarding body size. Use good judgment with the size of the hoops. Everyone should be able to fit through the largest hoops.

Safety

- Be sure to spot people as they move through the hoops.
- Encourage people to help one another in order to make the passing as safe as possible.
- People with back or knee injuries may not be able to do the bending and stretching necessary for this activity.

Debrief Issues

- **Competition:**
Seeing the group's response when you ask, "Who won?" after both hoops have circled the circle is interesting. The team soon realizes that the entire group must work together for the problem to be successful. Everyone wins!
- **Communication:**
How did people know what to do when it was their turn to pass the hoop? What types of communication did they use?
- **Teamwork:**
Was this an individual challenge, team challenge, pairs challenge, or all three? Why?

Mix and Match

Description

Small Group: 15–30

Indoor

You can use this activity as an ice-breaker or level I activity. This activity is a lot like the popular game of Scrabble and is a great way to get people working together.

Equipment Needs

- More than 30 3-inch-by-5-inch note cards (colors are nice), or paper (8½ inches by 11 inches, cut into quarters)
- Colored markers
- An low-wind, open area that is inside or outside to lay down the cards

Target Group

Anyone able to spell words (or others can help those who are still working on it)

Time Range

10–20 minutes

Briefing the Activity/ Guidelines

- Give each player a 3 x 5 card and a marker.
- Ask them to secretly write a vowel on one side of the card—nice and big—and a consonant on the other side (any two letters they want).
- When everyone is ready, ask them to get into groups of three or four people. To make a valid group, the players have to match their cards up in some way (they can use either side of their card, but not both at the same time)—spell a word, letters in a row, make up a new word, whatever way the group can justify its existence.
- Now ask the group to arrange all the cards (either the vowel or consonant side) into words (real ones this time).
- Every word must be attached in some way to another word—like a big crossword puzzle.
- You can give out some wildcards, but everyone in the group must agree on the wildcard letter.

Debrief Issues

- What letters did you choose? Any reason why you chose them?
- Did we discover any new words?
- What was hard about the activity?
- Once your card was used, what did you do?
- Was there a leader in the process?
- How was the leader appointed?
- What/Who was helpful during the activity?
- How did you choose to fit in?

Resources

Eugene Raudsepp. *Creative Growth Games*. New York: Jove, 1977.
ISBN 0-1562-2735-5. Out of print.

Chris Cavert and Laurie Frank. *Games (and other stuff) for Teachers: Activities that Promote Pro-Social Learning*. Oklahoma City: Wood N Barnes, 1999.
ISBN 1-8854-7322-2.

A What?

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity demonstrates various aspects of communicating effectively and points out some common communication barriers. Participants pass two objects in opposite directions around a circle. Before they pass the objects, participants ask and answer a question regarding the object. Similar to the children's game Telephone, the message sometimes takes on new meaning, and frequently someone forgets which direction to pass or speak. Creative objects and clever names make this a really fun activity.

Equipment Needs

Choose from things such as puppets, stuffed animals, rubber squeaky toys, or other objects that allow clever, tongue-twister names. Choose names with the same beginning sounds so that participants have a chance to laugh.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask the group to form a circle.
- Explain that you are going to pass two objects around the circle, and that as the objects are passed, you will tell the group what they are.
- Turn to the person to your left and tell him/her what the object is: "Toria, this is a brown bucktooth beaver."
- Have Toria ask you, "A what?" Then repeat the name of the object for her, "A brown bucktooth beaver."

- Hand the object to Toria and ask her to begin the process with the person to her left.
- Toria then turns to Mike and says, "Mike, this is a brown bucktooth beaver."
- Mike asks Toria, "A what?" She then turns back to you and asks, "A what?"
- You reply, "A brown bucktooth beaver." She turns to Mike and says, "A brown bucktooth beaver," and hands the object to Mike.
- Explain that they will continue to pass the object left until it returns to you and that the "a what?" question and the answer returned to the passer must travel back to you each time before they may pass the object.
- Take the object back and demonstrate with the second object, only this time passing it to the person to your right.
- After you feel the entire group understands the sequence, begin by passing the first object to the left and the second object to the right.
- Your task is to remain a part of the circle and announce the objects' names each time the "a what?" question comes back to you.

Variations

- Stop the activity after the objects pass one another in the circle, especially if you have a large group. Otherwise, the activity can take a lot of time.

What to Watch For

- People will frequently forget to pass the “a what?” question back around the circle and may need gentle reminders.
- Watch the person who is lucky (unlucky?) enough to have both objects passed to them at the same time at the cross-over point. How flustered is he/she? Do the people around her/him help?

Safety

- Ensure that objects are not tossed at one another.

Debrief Issues

- Communication:
What happened as the communication chain got longer? Where was the weakest point? Why?
- Teamwork:
What were some specific examples of how the group supported one another? When did you feel most a part of the team? Did you ever feel that you were working alone?
- Frustration:
At what point did you sense frustration during this activity? If you did, how did it affect the team? How did it affect you? How did it affect the outcome?

Ball Toss I—Group Juggle

Description

Small Group: Max. 20

Indoor or Outdoor

This activity emphasizes the importance of communication and an individual’s contribution to a group goal. It involves tossing a ball (or other soft throwable object) from one participant to another across a circle, forming a pattern. Without the group’s knowledge, the facilitator will then add more objects to the pattern so that the group attempts to juggle the objects between them. A further goal may be to have the group juggle all of the objects at once.

Equipment Needs

Choose soft objects that won’t hurt if someone is hit. Koosh balls, Nerf balls, stuffed animals, rubber chickens, and so forth all make great objects to toss. Use as many objects as you have participants. Choose objects that are different sizes and require different throwing/catching techniques. This helps in debriefing by discussing how issues come in different shapes and sizes.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask the group to form a loose circle; include yourself in the circle.
- Announce that you are going to throw a ball to a person across the circle, and that person will then throw the ball to another person on the other side of the circle, continuing until everyone has caught the ball. The object is to create a pattern by tossing the ball to everyone in the group.

- Before throwing the object, you must say the name of the person to whom you are throwing. This person then says the name of another person across the circle and throws the object.
- This throw-and-catch action continues until everyone in the circle has thrown and caught the object. The sequence should start and end with you.
- Emphasize that each person has to remember to whom they threw the ball and from whom they received it.
- To facilitate this throwing/receiving process, ask each person who has not yet received the ball to hold both hands up in a receiving position and to put their hands down after they have received the ball.
- Perform the tossing sequence a few more times or until you feel the group has become comfortable with the sequence.
- During the second or third round, when the first object is about midway through the sequence, surprise the group by adding more objects until there are about as many objects as people. Encourage the group to pick up dropped objects and keep them in play.
- To end the activity, remove the balls from play as they are tossed to you.

Variations

- As a continuation of the activity, have the group attempt to juggle these multiple objects. First, ask the group what the goals of juggling are:
 - keep objects in the air without drops
 - rotate objects multiple times through the sequence
 - form a consistent pattern
- Ask the group members how many objects they feel they can juggle at once.
- Based on the experience from the surprise group juggle, what are some things the participants can change to help them be successful. For example:
 - space objects more consistently
 - some people will throw high, others low
 - don't throw an object until the person is ready to receive it
- Have the group attempt to juggle the objects through the sequence at least once. If they drop objects, encourage them to continue the juggle anyway.
- Ask again how the participants can improve the process. Readjust and try once more.

What to Look For

- People to whom you unexpectedly tossed the objects will undoubtedly have surprised looks on their faces. Be sure to ask them how they felt.
- Notice whether some people are throwing objects without first making sure that their receivers are ready to catch.
- Are some people stockpiling objects?
- After doing the group juggle several times they'll undoubtedly get better and sometimes will even begin to get bored—the excitement level usually drops off at this point.
- People may stop using names before throwing the objects.

Safety

- Be sure to use soft objects that won't hurt people who get hit.
- Stress that people should toss, not throw, the objects.

Debrief Issues

- Communication:
What forms of communication did the participants use? What were the communication barriers? With whom did each person communicate most/least?
- Goals:
What was the individual goal? What was the group goal? How were these different or the same? What were some barriers to achieving the goals?
- Teamwork:
What were some specific examples where the team worked together well? Examples where it didn't? How did the team improve?
- Problem Solving:
What process did the team use to improve the group juggle? Were everyone's ideas heard? Did every one buy in? How did that affect the goal?

Ball Toss II—Warp Speed

Description

Indoor or Outdoor

Small Group: Max. 20

This activity builds on Ball Toss I (previously described) by emphasizing problem solving and doing more with less. This time, the group passes one object forward and another object backward through an established sequence in a circle.

Equipment Needs

Choose two objects that are fairly similar in size and shape, but are distinct from one another (for example, a rubber frog and a Koosh ball). Participants should be able to easily grasp them in one hand.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Keeping the sequence established in Ball Toss I, introduce two objects into the circle—one goes forward through the sequence (frog = forward), while the other goes backward (ball = backward).
- Ask everyone to point to the person to whom they will throw the frog. It should be the same person to whom they've been throwing all along. Ask everyone to point to the person to whom they will throw the ball. It should be the person from whom they received in the first sequence.
- Practice this once to make sure that the team gets the sequence down—especially the backward sequence. Time this sequence without the group's knowledge to get a general idea of long it will take.
- Do the sequence again. This time let the group members know you are timing them to get an average time that it takes for them to accomplish the task.
- Tell the group the average time it took and facilitate them toward a consensus regarding a time goal for accomplishing this task. Ask for input from around the circle to get various responses, but get the team to agree on an initial time goal.
- Once the participants establish time goal, try the sequence again and see how close they get to the goal. Try again if the team fails to achieve the goal.
- Challenge the group to develop the most time-efficient method for moving the balls through the sequence. How quick can they become?
- Celebrate each successful attempt!
- End this activity when the team agrees that it can no longer greatly improve its efficiency.

Variations

- You may want to push the group members by asking them to cut their time in half. This will seem impossible to some people and will hopefully cause them to think “outside the box” to come up with a solution. (Changing the order so that people are next to the person they are giving to or receiving from will cut a lot of time off—don't give it away, though!)
- After celebrating this, ask them to cut it yet again; you'll get a lot of blank stares and hopefully some creative solutions.
- The story line may be something like, “I really appreciate the effort that this group has put into cutting the time of this process, but our customers need the ‘product’ even faster.”
- You may want to introduce the following problem-solving technique if the group is unable to find a way to cut its time: Divide the group into smaller teams (three or four people per group). Ask them to brainstorm ideas for cutting the time and to appoint a spokesperson for their groups. After several minutes, ask the spokespeople to tell the rest of the groups the one or two ideas they came up with. Encourage everyone to listen without commenting as each spokesperson shares their group's ideas. Now have the spokespeople decide which one idea they want to try to implement.

What to Look For

- Some people in the group may push for unrealistic time goals or they may set goals that are very easily reached. Encourage them to pick challenging, but realistic, goals.
- The group may improve steadily and then level out.
- The group may achieve a particular time goal and decide that it cannot improve beyond it.
- Some members of the group may resist restructuring.
- A group can get its time down to one or two seconds! Some strategies include:
 - speeding up the toss and throwing harder (be aware of safety issues)
 - repositioning to being as close as possible
 - suggesting various body angles (one leg in, one leg out, and so on)
 - reforming into a line according to the sequence
 - reforming the circle according to the sequence
- Notice if the group members dropped the use of names in an effort to be efficient.
- Observe how this team works toward a consensus and how they attempt to solve problems. You can use observations to assess the team for later activities.

Safety

- Use a flat and open area

Debrief Issues

- **Problem Solving:**
How did the group members come up with their solutions? Did everyone have a chance to contribute or were only a few people involved? Which solutions proved to be the most useful? Where were the breakdowns? How did participants feel if they weren't one of the spokespersons/decision makers in the consensus part of the activity?
- **Leadership:**
Were there any leaders during this activity? What was their role? Was a leader necessary? What were the other roles?
- **Goals:**
What did the group lose and/or gain as it established efficiency in the task?
- **Teamwork:**
What were some examples of good team process?

Line-Ups

Description

Big or Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This good introductory activity allows people to interact with one another in a nonthreatening way and can lead to good discussions about communication. The goal is for the group to line up in various configurations that the facilitator assigns.

Equipment Needs

None

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask the group members to stand in a line so that they are shoulder to shoulder.
- Ask them to line themselves up in any of the following orders (these get increasingly more challenging; read your group and see what you think they can do—then do one level higher!):
 - Height, hair length (visual clues are obviously easy and a good way to start)
 - Shoe size, number of siblings, number of pets, birthday (month and day)
 - Alphabetically by name, favorite flavor of ice cream, cities/states where they were born, cities/states where they live, favorite animal, and so on
- When the participants indicate that they are finished, ask them their order and encourage them to celebrate their success.

- Next, have them line up in a different order, but this time without talking.
- When they are done, ask them their order and celebrate their success.

Variations

- Have the group stand on a rope or line up in a circle or half circle.
- Remove another method of communication by telling the group that the next lineup will be without talking *and* seeing. Ensure them that you will watch them. After all group members are blindfolded, you should move them around so that they are spread out. Next, walk around and whisper a number to each. Tell them that you have given each member a number and that the challenge is for them to line up, holding hands in sequential order.

What to Look For

- How did they communicate with one another?
- Did they help one another or did they work individually?
- Who was frustrated? How did that affect the group (especially with the blind lineup)?

Safety

- When blindfolded, encourage people to keep their “bumpers up” when moving around.
- You will need to steer people back to the group if they start to wander off.
- Ensure that the area you are using doesn’t have any hazards such as trees, rocks, or other physical barriers that would interfere with the activity.

Debrief Issues

- Communication:
How did losing various communication methods affect their success? What was a reaction after they lost the ability to speak? How did that affect their problem solving?
- Problem Solving:
How did they come up with alternate communication techniques?
- Teamwork:
Did they help one another? Did a leader emerge?
- Frustration:
Who was frustrated? Why? How did that affect the activity’s success?

Jump Rope

Description

Small Group
Indoor (big space) or Outdoor

The goal of this activity is for all of the group members to successfully jump through the rope using teamwork. This activity has three parts for the group members to try. The challenge may include one or all parts.

Equipment Needs

- A jump rope that is long enough to allow the total number of participants to jump safely (2 feet per participant)

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Introduce the activity by telling the group that some people will think the next activity is easy and others will find it challenging. Ask that they keep an open mind and realize that different members will have varying skills at completing this task.
- The facilitator and one other person (observer, teacher, or one helper from the team) will be the rope turners.
- Part I:
Ask the group to gather on one side of the rope. Have them jump, one at a time, through the rope. If someone messes up, the whole group must start again.

- Part II:
Tell them that they will each have the opportunity to jump again, but this time they should not allow the rope to skip between people. For example, the rope will turn only once for each participant. Again, if someone messes up, the whole group must start again.
- Part III:
A final challenge could be to see how many times the entire group can simultaneously jump without tripping on the rope. Ask the group to come up with a goal. Make sure to facilitate it in such a way that all members buy into the final number. Allow the group members to readjust as necessary to meet their goal. They may decide to move participants around or may even choose to lower their goal.

Variations

- You may choose to do only one or all of the parts described above.

What to Look For

- How supportive is the group to the members who have a hard time with the activity?
- How did they decide on the number of jumps for the entire group?
- What suggestions are they making to be helpful?

Safety

- Do this activity on a soft surface so that if someone falls, they won't get scraped.
- Be prepared to stop turning the rope immediately.
- Turn the rope slowly.
- Ensure the emotional safety of the group, especially for the people who are not good jumpers. If someone is absolutely against jumping, perhaps he/she could be a turner.
- When all participants jump at once, be sure to caution them about hitting one another's knees.

Debrief Issues

- Teamwork:
Did the group support the people who needed extra help? Was there a leader?
- Problem Solving:
Did they rearrange the order of the jumpers? Did they make other adjustments?

Puzzle Pieces

Description

Small Group
Indoor

This activity highlights verbal and nonverbal communication. Each person takes a turn describing a shape to their partners, who in turn attempt to create the shape using only verbal clues.

Equipment Needs

One packet of precut shapes (puzzle) per pair (each packet contains two identical cutouts of each shape that must be divided between the partners)

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask the group members to find partners. If you are working with an intact group, ask them to pair up with someone they interact with on a regular basis.
- Next, have them decide who will be the first to create the shape.
- Sitting back to back, have the creators make shapes with the puzzle pieces. Their partners should not be able to see what they are doing.
- After each creator has successfully completed their shapes, have them describe it to their partners, who attempt to create an identical shape using only the creator's verbal descriptions.
- After they are finished, have them discuss what worked and what didn't as they see how close they came to creating identical shapes.

- For the second part of the activity, have them switch roles so that the other person has the chance to create a puzzle shape. Ask them to once again sit back to back while the new person creates a shape.
- After the creators complete their puzzle shapes, they will describe it to their partners. This time, however, their listening partner may not speak—not even to ask questions or to clarify. This will undoubtedly frustrate both of them.
- When each pair finishes, have them compare their puzzles and discuss the difficulties in this second method.

Variations

- Instead of using precut puzzle pieces, you can draw two different shapes out of circles, squares, triangles, and other shapes. Make enough copies for each pair so that each person has a different shape. Instead of creating their partner's shapes, they will need to draw them.
- Giving each set of partners a random set of objects—dice, paperclips, playing cards, dominoes, clothespins, and so on—is another alternative to using puzzle pieces. This adds a three-dimensional component to the activity and can be more challenging.
- You could also have the creators draw shapes on a piece of paper and then have their partners attempt to recreate what they drew. Caution people to draw fairly simple drawings that can be easily duplicated by their partners.
- To make this activity even more challenging, you could have the creator only able to respond to yes/no questions during the first creation.

What to Look For

- This may be relatively easy for some pairs and more challenging for others.
- Make sure that the “no talking” rule is in effect, even though this will be very frustrating for some people.
- Some participants may compete with other pairs. Try to encourage each pair to have their own set of criteria for establishing success

Safety

- Watch frustration levels.

Debrief Issues

- Communication:
What were the differences between the first and second activities? What contributed to the frustration if there was any? What makes communication effective?
- Leadership:
What were the creators' or leaders' challenges in this activity? How about the person who was the second creator? What were the followers' challenges?

Human Knot

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This no-prop activity can help energize a bored group as well as spark a cooperative spirit from a frustrated group. The goal is for the group to get all team members untied from the “human knot” without letting go of their hand connections.

Equipment Needs

- Hands!
- Flat surface

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask a group of 10–15 individuals to face one another in a tight, shoulder-to-shoulder circle.
- Each person extends their right hand and grasps the right hand of someone else across the circle, as if they were shaking hands.
- Each person should then hold out their left hand and grasp the left hand of **someone else** across the circle, so that each person is holding two different people’s hands. This hand-to-hand configuration should come out equal. If you have an odd number of people, ask someone to join his/her right hand with someone else’s left hand.
- To make sure that the participants have correctly accomplished this, start with one person and ask him/her to squeeze his/her right hand. Then ask the person whose hand was squeezed to pass the squeeze to the other person’s hand he/she is

holding. If everyone felt the squeeze, they’ve completed part one correctly.

- The objective is to undo the knot without letting go of the hands. They can let go to change their grasp to a more comfortable position. Emphasize that they will need to be careful as they move around and undo their knot. Also, ask them to be careful not to twist and pull one another’s arms.
- Two or three circles may form, depending on the way that the participants connected hands. If one circle finishes, encourage them to help the others.
- This knot problem can take a few short minutes, or it can take quite a while. If the group is struggling, you might want to offer “knot first aid,” which allows one pair of hands to separate and then rejoin on the outside of the knot.

Variations

- If people don’t like to be close, instead of holding hands, ask each participant to grasp either end of a rope. Cut a series of rope lengths that measure about 5-feet long, and tie an overhand knot in each end. Give each participant one length just before the activity begins. Make sure they don’t grab two ropes coming from the same person. Have them untangle the knot as above.
- Another variation is to have them travel, after they’ve formed the knot, from one location to another. You can up the challenge by requiring that they each know everyone else’s favorite flavor of ice cream by the time they reach their destination. This variation focuses on communication between group members and problem solving as they figure out how to move from point A to B without letting go. As a facilitator, be sure to spot as they walk.

What to Look For

- Some groups may be uncomfortable touching one another and getting close enough to solve the knot problem.
- Be aware of who the leader is, who is coming up with ideas, who is trying to solve the problem, who is just watching, who is tuned out, and who is frustrated. All of these roles add to the dynamics of the group.

Safety

- Emphasize that if people are being pulled or twisted, they should let go to readjust their hand grips.
- Be sure to spot each person as they step over arms.
- If you see people in awkward positions, encourage them to readjust their hand positions.
- If using the rope variation above, make sure that the group moves slowly in order to avoid “clotheslining” anyone.

Debrief Issues

- Problem Solving
What process did the group members use in deciding how to untangle the knot? Or did they just jump in and start? Could they have been more successful with a different planning method?
- Communication:
What types of communication did the group use during this activity?
- Trust:
In what ways did you have to trust team members in order to accomplish your part? How does trust affect the team and the process?

Balloon Toss

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity is great for communication and allowing the group to work in two small teams that eventually will work together as a large group. Divide the group in two, with each part of the team standing on opposite sides of a large wall or tarp. One group needs to figure out how to transport items (water balloons) to the other group over the tarp or wall without using certain keywords.

Equipment Needs

- A large wall or tarp at least 12-feet high
- Water balloons
- Random items such as buckets, sheets, towels, old bicycle tire tubes, egg crates, and so forth

Setup

Hang a tarp on a 12-foot line between two trees or posts so that participants cannot see from one side to the other.

Time of Activity

Depending on the group, this activity could take 20–45 minutes.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- A metaphor you can use is that half of the group is going on an expedition. They got into some bad weather and are running low on supplies. The second half of the group is going to try to help them by getting supplies to the expedition team. The wall symbolizes a mountain that is between the expedition team and its helpers.
- Share that you will give both groups certain resources. Neither group knows what the other group has. Although the two groups can communicate, the “mountain” is an obstacle. Therefore communication is limited.
- Each group will receive a list of words that they cannot say to the other group (*or* out loud to one another) to symbolize this lack of communication.
- Divide the group in half and place the expedition team on one side of the wall and the helpers on the other side of the wall.
- Give the expedition team a bucket, sheets, towels, old bicycle tire tubes, egg crates, and so on, and a list that has on it all the items they have been given (these are the words they can't say).
- Give a bucket that has four or five water balloons in it to the helpers and let them know that they may use any of their own resources, but that the objects must go from one side of the wall to the other over the top. Give this group the list of words that they cannot say to the other group (*or* out loud to one another). The list of words: water,

balloon, fragile, sphere, breakable, rubber, throw, explode, wet, H₂O, vessel, container

Facilitating the Activity

- Try to stand at the edge of the wall so that you can see and speak to both sides. Remind them that, although they are on different sides of the wall, their goal is to work together.

Safety

- Make sure that the participants throw only appropriate items over the wall.

Debrief Issues

- Teamwork:
You can cover a lot of debrief topics here (for example, different teams of people that are all still working toward the same goal, whether the two groups really acted as one team).
- Creative Problem Solving:
How did the group work together to be creative? What supplies did they use?
- Accomplishing a task with limited resources.

Maze

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity provides the group with a problem-solving and communication challenge. The group must figure out the pre-established, hidden pattern in a maze of squares. The only clue indicating how they're doing is the "buzz" they get when they make a wrong move.

Equipment Needs

You can set up the maze with a variety of materials. Most commonly used are carpet squares, set up in a 5-foot-by-5-foot square, so there are 25 spaces in all. (The size of the square can vary, getting as big as 7 feet by 8 feet!) Other materials that you can use include cardboard, paper, or large index cards. You can also use a painted cloth maze that is set up in a 6-foot-by-8-foot square. Before the activity begins, the facilitator must create the correct maze by simply mapping out the pattern on a grid or piece of scratch paper.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Only one person can move at a time. An additional rule might be that those who have moved incorrectly may not attempt the maze again until everyone else in the group has had a turn.
- As individuals are moving through the maze, they must step on the correct spot each time. If they step on an incorrect spot, you could make a buzzing sound as an indicator, and the individuals and/or group must start again.
- Correct moves include only those that are immediately adjacent to the spot that an individual is standing on. This includes moves that are backwards, forwards, sideways, and diagonal.
- Once participants have successfully reached the other side, they can do anything that encourages the other team members to reach the other side.

Variations

- Once you explain the maze, give the group members 5 minutes to come up with a plan for completing the task. After 5 minutes they can no longer talk to one another.

What to Look For

- Who assumes leadership of the group?
- What types of planning did the group do prior to attempting the activity?
- Who needs help or who asked for support from the group?

Safety

- Make sure that you are using a flat surface for the maze.

Debrief Issues

- **Communication:**
What verbal and/or nonverbal communication methods did the group use? How did people pass on information to assist others in figuring out the pattern? What was it like for the entire team to be mute? What communication barriers have you dealt with when attempting to solve a task?
- **Problem Solving:**
Who figured out the pattern—was it one person or did everyone in the group help to remember the correct move? How was starting over consistent with how we work to solve problems? How was it different?
- **Teamwork:**
What was the individual role versus the group role in solving this problem? What does lack of team involvement do for team morale?

Paper Towers

Description

Small Group

Indoor

This competition promotes small-group teamwork in building the largest, free-standing, paper tower possible using only newspapers (no tape or other help). You can use this activity with small or large groups.

Equipment Needs

- An indoor flat space
- Lots of newspaper or scrap paper (equal piles for each group)

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Divide the big group up into groups of four to six people.
- Assign each group a space to create a free-standing paper tower.
- Each group should have an equal stack of newspaper or scrap paper.
- Give the group 10 minutes to create the tallest free-standing tower that they possibly can build.
- The groups may *not* use tape, paperclips, and other fastening devices.

Variations

- You can give the group as much time as you would like.
- Use balloons and tape (but clean-up will be loud)

What to Look For

- Watch how group members interact. Are there leaders? Dreamers? Those with a vision? Organizers? Followers?
- Look for quality versus quantity. What is the value of this? Why?

Debrief Issues

- Did competition or the process drive the group?
- **Communication:**
How well did the group communicate while building the tower?
- **Teamwork:**
Did the whole group work together or did one or two individuals take control? Why?
- What roles did the group members play in the process?

Level II

Activities

All Aboard

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

Physical closeness, in combination with problem solving, is one of the goals of this activity. You'll hear a lot of people saying, "There's no way we can get our entire group on that small platform!" To ease them into the challenge, you can start on the larger platform and then move to the smaller one. Or, you can have them start with fewer people and work toward more. Because this is an extremely "close" activity, the group members must have a comfort level with one another that will enable them to accomplish this challenge.

Equipment Needs

You will use two different-sized platforms; one is roughly 2 feet by 2 feet and the other is roughly 3 feet by 3 feet. For an indoor version, you can use carpet squares inside a rope circle to simulate the platform or you can even fold up a tarp to an appropriate small size for the group. You can then fold it even smaller for the next level.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- The goal of the activity is to get every team member on the platform.
- Introduce the activity using a story line that outlines the goal of the activity (for example, the platform represents the transporter in Star Trek and the group needs to be beamed up to escape certain contamination).
- To be considered on the platform, each person must have at least one foot on the platform and must not be touching the ground in any way.
- The group should remain standing on the platform for approximately 10 seconds or as long as it takes to say, "Beam me up, Scotty."
- The number of people that can fit on each platform varies from group to group and depends on their creativity and willingness to get close. Groups of about twelve participants should fit on even smaller platforms.

Variations

- You can start the group with the challenge of the larger platform. After success on this one, have them move to the smaller platform. They may need to come up with a new solution to fit on the smaller one, which can lead to an interesting discussion about creative problem solving.
- If the group seems unlikely to solve an “All Aboard” on even the larger platform, you may ask them to set a goal for the number of people they think they can have standing on the platform. After they’ve done this successfully, encourage the group to increase its goal until all people are on the platform or until they reach a point where they are satisfied with their accomplishment.

What to Look For

- Participants who are extremely frustrated during this activity.
- The group may jump on the platform and try something without a plan (lots of trial and error).
- The group may continually attempt to solve the problem using only one method and encounter repeated failure.
- A few individuals may lose their balance and pull other participants off the platform (see safety section).

Safety

- Make sure all participants are “standing” on the platform. Participants should not lift or place people on shoulders.
- When participants are not on the platform, they should be spotting others who are on the platform.
- Emphasize that if participants feel like they are losing their balance, the best thing for them to do is step off. There is no penalty for stepping off. Also, emphasize that those stepping off should let go of those around them so they do not pull the others off.
- Spotting by the facilitator is extremely important during this entire activity.

Debrief Issues

- Teamwork:
How did the team members support one another physically? Emotionally? How did this support affect the outcome of the activity? What other ways can we support one another?
- Problem Solving:
What problem-solving process did this team use? What aspects of the process yielded the best results? What could the team have used more of during the process?
- Leadership:
How did leadership affect the outcome of the activity? What other types of leadership were/ would be helpful? What is the role of the follower in this activity? Is this an important role? Why or why not?

River Crossing

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity pulls the group together and introduces problem solving. The goal is for the group to safely move from one side of a raging river to the other side using only the boards provided.

Equipment Needs

- Ropes and cones can mark the boundary of the river. The river should be approximately 40-feet wide. Another way to determine width is to take twice as many steps as there are boards.
- The number of boards varies according to group size. Estimate how many average-sized people can stand on each board. Have enough “spaces” for everyone in the group and then add one large board. You may also want to keep an extra small board with you in case the people are bigger than you had expected and get stuck.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Introduce the group to the “river” via a story about acid rain or poisonous peanut butter—some excuse for not allowing them to step in the river.
- Their goal is to get the entire group across the river. However, no one may step onto the opposite shore until all members of the team are on the river.
- The boards provided are the only resources available to the group. They cannot step in the river or on any other surface. Once you place the boards in the river, participants cannot slide them into position; they must pick up and replace them. As a safety precaution, the participants may not throw the boards.
- The group should decide on an appropriate consequence if anyone comes in contact with the river. If time permits, starting over is usually a good consequence because it requires less-focused groups to pay more attention in an effort to complete the activity. It can also lead to great discussions around frustration, blaming the person who stepped off, and how overcoming adversity strengthened the team.

Variations

- Split a large group into two smaller ones and place them at opposite sides of the river. Give each group enough boards for their small groups. The goal is for each group to reach the opposite shore. Emphasize, however, that this is not a race. As each group solves the initiative on their own, someone may suggest that they work together. Watch the competitive dynamic unfold. This variation makes for an interesting debrief session on sharing resources and cooperation. Make sure you mark the boundary twice the length of both groups’ boards combined.
- Use carpet squares or pieces or 12-inch-by-12-inch paper. Using the river-crossing scenario, have the group cross the river with the following guidelines. Group members may not lose physical contact with a river-crossing piece. If they do, the facilitator will take the piece and it will be forever lost. Give almost all the group members a piece (for example, if the group has 12 people, give out only 10 pieces). They must get across using their existing resources.

What to Look For

- Some people may jump in and start to lay out the boards without much thought, while others stay back to think and plan. This may cause the group to disagree.
- The team may try to lay out the boards and leap frog across the river. The distance should be too wide for them to do this without reusing the boards.
- The lead person may place the boards too far apart for others in the group to reach.
- Team members may hesitate to get physically close.
- One or two team members may dominate the entire activity. If this happens, you can always give them laryngitis so they can’t talk for the remainder of the activity.
- Some team members may lose focus and tune out during the process—possibly because the group did not hear their ideas.
- Conflict may arise due to differing styles.
- The team members may get frustrated and believe the task to be impossible, especially if they have had to start over numerous times.
- Separate problem-solving groups may form.
- The team may challenge the activity guidelines or ask you to restate the rules.
- The team may have a fast beginning, and then reach an impasse; progress then becomes slower and more deliberate.

Safety

- To solve the problem, people will need to gather close together, hanging on to one another for dear life. People may begin to lose their balance, so spot carefully and be ready to act if a group member(s) starts to fall.
- Make sure no one gets hit with a board that is getting passed up the line.
- Jumping from one board to another is not allowed.
- Be careful on slippery grass or wet surfaces.
- People cannot carry or lift one another.
- Do not allow the group to throw the boards.

Debrief Issues

- Teamwork:
What one or two adjectives describe your feelings about your team effort? What were the key elements to your success? What were the roadblocks to your success?
- Problem Solving:
What is your perception of your planning effort as a team?
- Leadership:
How did leadership present itself? Who had it? When?
- Competition:
Was there any internal competition during the course of this activity?

Mine Field

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity involves extensive communication between two participants of a team. One participant can see, the other is blindfolded. The sighted partner's goal is to safely guide the unsighted partner through a dangerous mine field. The sighted partner is located on one side of the mine field and the unsighted person is on the other. Using verbal cues, the two must communicate effectively to accomplish the task without setting off any mines.

Equipment Needs

- 1 blindfold per pair
- 1 large rope to mark the boundary of the mine field (approximately 100 feet)
- Soft and flat objects of all shapes and sizes to scatter within the boundary to represent land mines

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Set up a mine field that is about 30 feet by 20 feet. You may wish to make the mine field larger if your group size is larger than 10 people. Scatter objects (land mines) all throughout the boundary area.
- Have each participant find a partner. One person should choose to be blindfolded first (they may close their eyes if they are not comfortable being blindfolded).
- Explain to the group that the sighted partners are responsible for verbally guiding their nonsighted partners safely through the mine field.
- Once you have explained the objective, encourage participants to discuss a method of communication to use with their partners.
- Have partners establish a goal for the maximum number of land mines they will hit as they cross the mine field and a consequence if they hit more.
- After they have finished, send the sighted partners to the other end of the mine field.
- All participants must begin the activity at the same time.
- After all blindfolded participants have successfully crossed the mine field, have each pair switch roles and repeat the activity.

Variations

- You can also create a three-dimensional mine field by hanging objects from ropes that you string across the mine field. Be sure to place these ropes well above the height of the tallest participant.
- As the guides move across the field, have them pick up one object that in some way symbolizes the land mines in their lives. At the end of the activity, ask them to share this with the group as well as some ways they are working around these mines.

What to Look For

- Some partners may plan ahead to determine a safer route for crossing the mine field.
- Many partners may encounter difficulties communicating, which arise from the distraction of all participants talking at one time.
- Do the partners stick to the consequences they established?

Safety

- Use soft objects as mines to reduce the chance of ankle injury.
- Spot blindfolded participants when needed as they cross the mine field.
- Be cautious of both the physical and emotional safety of all participants. Give all participants the option of closing their eyes if they are not comfortable being blind folded. Also, be aware of the area where you are setting up the mine field. It should be relatively level and free of rocks, stumps, and other natural obstacles.

Debrief Issues

- **Communication:**
What communication systems did the pairs try? What worked? What types of things interfered with communication? How did they affect the outcome?
- **Leadership:**
Was it easier to be a guide or to be guided?
- **Trust:**
How was trust important in this activity?
- **Quality:**
Did people stick to their consequences? If not, why?
- **Competition:**
Did anyone time their effort? Did participants express a sense of competing against other pairs? Did people encourage other pairs after they were done?

Traffic Jam

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This cognitive puzzle enables the group to explore their problem-solving and leadership skills. You will divide the group into two teams and ask them to stand on boards that you have placed on the floor. Their challenge is to exchange places with the other team by using only the spaces provided.

Equipment Needs

Traffic Jam boards or mats (one for each participant plus an extra one for the middle). The boards have arrows on them to indicate the direction that the person will initially face. You can also create your own place holders using paper and drawing an arrow on each piece except the middle one.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Create a semicircle using the Traffic Jam boards or mats. Start with a blank board in the middle and then place the remaining boards on either side, forming two curved lines. Place the boards so that the arrows point toward the blank board in the middle.
- Divide the group into two teams. Have one team stand on the boards to the left of the middle board and the other team to the right. Have everyone face the direction of the arrow on their board. You should now have two teams facing one another with a blank board separating them.

- The goal is for the people on the left to occupy the boards on the right and vice versa, while remaining in their original order. This means that the first person on the left-hand side of the blank board will occupy the last space of the line on the right-hand side, the second person will occupy the second to last space, and so forth; they will end up facing the opposite direction of the arrows on the boards.
- Here are the rules:
 - You can move into an empty space in front of you.
 - You can move around another person into an empty space.
 - You cannot move backwards.
 - Only one person can move at a time.
 - Only one person can occupy a space at a time.
 - You cannot move the spaces.
- Tell the group that you will let them know when they make an illegal move or reach an impasse. When this happens, they will need to start over in their original positions.
- To clarify the rules, you may want to demonstrate by physically moving individuals to show both the legal and illegal moves.

Variations

- When each team lines up, place the softest-spoken members at the beginning. Most of the movement occurs there and it may force these people into more of a leadership role. Likewise, placing the “leaders” at the end of the line may produce some frustration as they are forced to watch rather than act.
- You can use this activity to discuss the “unwritten rules” that are frequently found in organizations. Give the group the same goal as in the regular activity, but only give them the first of the legal moves (that they move by using an empty space). A “buzz” from you indicates that they made an illegal move and must start again. At the end of the activity they must be able to tell you what the rules are.

What to Look For

- For some people, this type of puzzle is fun; for others it’s agony. Watch for the variety of responses from each individual.
- Because this activity usually takes lots of trial and error, the first three people are really involved and move around a lot. The people at the end of the lines will likely become bored and disinterested from lack of involvement.
- Often the teams will make the same mistakes over and over again. If you see this happening and the frustration levels become high, suggest that the group take a time-out to discuss what has been working and what has not and then try again.

Safety

- No real issues of safety.

Debrief Issues

- Problem Solving: What was the planning process for this activity? How was it different from other activities? How was it the same?
- Leadership: Who were the leaders? How were they chosen? What was the role of the followers?
- Inclusion: How involved was each individual in the completion of this activity? How interested was each individual? How did that affect the outcome?
- Learning Styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic): How do varying learning styles affect the enjoyment of an activity or task?

Blind Maze

Description

Big or Small Group

Outdoor

Close your eyes and imagine that you are in the middle of a complex maze with only one way out. You can easily get side-tracked in many places and stuck in dead ends. You get very frustrated until finally you find the exit. As a group, the blindfolded participants must find their way through a complex maze until the entire group is safely outside. You can easily build the maze using metal rods, twine, and fencing connectors.

Equipment Needs

- 1 blindfold for each participant
- Approximately 15 steel rods
- Yellow fencing connectors
- Fine rope or cord

Place the rods in a large oval-shaped formation to create the outside boundary. Make a very narrow exit. Place the remaining rods in the center of the boundary in a sporadic fashion. Run twine from the outside boundary to the internal rods to make confusing dead ends.

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Blindfold participants in an area that is out of the sight of the maze. Have them form a line and place their hands on the shoulders or hips of the person in front of them. Lead them into the maze by holding up the rope and asking them to duck under it. Once inside the maze, have each person hold onto the rope.

- Explain that they are inside a maze and finding the exit is their task. Ask them to be careful of the tops of the metal rods and plastic connectors as they move along the rope.
- To find the exit, they may stay as a large group, break into smaller groups, or move around as individuals. They cannot, however, pass under the rope boundaries of the maze. Encourage them to walk slowly with their hands up (“bumpers up” style) if they let go of the rope.
- As participants exit the maze, remove their blindfolds and ask them not to talk. Some people may become frustrated because they will want to help those still trapped within the maze.

Variations

- You can use this variation to highlight the difficulty of working alone and needing to ask for help. As you lead the blindfolded line into the maze, lead each individual to a different place and have them hold onto the rope. When everyone is placed, tell the group that asking for help is the only way they may communicate. When they ask, you will go over and whisper a suggestion to them. As before, once they exit the maze, remove the blindfold and ask them to remain silent. After about 30 minutes, you should stop the activity since frustration levels may be getting too high.

What to Look For

- Group members who decide to go on their own without communicating these ideas to the group.
- Individuals who become frustrated as time passes and fail to find the exit.
- Individuals who found the exit may try to help those who are still in the maze.
- Be aware of how the group works together and communicates ideas to achieve the task.

Safety

- Give a description of the maze and the materials you used to construct the maze. Emphasize that the poles are metal rods that are about chest height. Be careful, some of the rods are sharp on the top end.
- When participants are not holding on to the rope boundary, they should be walking with their “bumpers up.”

Debrief Issues

- Teamwork:
What were the individual goals versus group goals in this activity? How did the group members work as a team even if people worked individually? If the group fell apart, how did that affect individuals?
- Communication:
Was not communicating difficult once you were out of the maze? Why?
- Frustration:
How did frustration affect the outcome?

Pot of Gold

Small Group

Indoor (large space) or Outdoor

Description

This can be a very challenging activity for some groups. It requires good problem-solving and communication skills. Because it may produce frustration among some participants, it will help them assess how they work under pressure as a team. The object is to move a bucket with a softball (the “gold”) out of the original circle and into a smaller circle located down the trail. The group may use only the provided materials to move the bucket without the softball falling off.

Equipment Needs

- 1 large 5-gallon bucket
- 1 piece of rubber bicycle inner tube tied in a loop so that it will fit tightly around the bucket like a tight rubber band around a poster
- 8–12 pieces of clothesline rope, 10–12 feet in length. At least every two people should have one rope. You may decide to pre-attach the ropes to the tire tube or give the ropes separately to the participants for a more challenging activity.
- 1 large piece of rope, at least 60 feet in length (long enough to make a circle that has a 20-foot diameter)
- Blindfolds (if necessary, see variation)
- Softball or other object to place on top of the bucket
- Hula hoop to make a location for transferring the “pot of gold”

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Set up the activity in an area large enough to place the large circle. In the middle of the circle place the bucket upside down with the “gold” on top. Approximately 25 to 50 yards down the trail from the main activity, set up a hula hoop or a small rope circle to mark a location for transferring the “pot of gold.” You can pile the remaining supplies (clothesline ropes, inner tubes, and so on) near the large circle.
- Have everyone form a loose circle around the large boundary circle.
- Explain that the softball (the “gold”) is very special to the group because it represents all of the experiences that the participants have learned that day. The group needs to protect it as they take it back to their school, office, or work environment. Transporting the bucket and softball from the large circle to a smaller circle down the trail symbolizes the integration of this “gold” into their lives.
- To successfully complete the task they must adhere to the following rules:
 - They may only use the materials in the pile by the large circle.
 - No one may physically enter the rope or hula hoop boundaries. Hands and arms are not permitted in the circle.
 - No one may touch the bucket or the softball.
 - If the softball falls off, the group must start again.

Variations

- Before beginning the activity, have all participants form a loose circle around the boundary circle. Pass the softball around the circle and have participants share one comment that pertains to their teambuilding experience. Examples include: What you want to learn today, what you can take away from this experience, what you have learned about teamwork, and so on. After everyone has shared, place the softball on top of the overturned bucket and explain the activity.
- At a point some distance from the activity, ask everyone to find a partner and decide who will be blindfolded and who will be the guide. Have the guides lead their partners to the activity area and ask them to form a loose circle around the large boundary. Explain the rules with the twist that only the blindfolded participants may touch the materials.

What to Look For

- The group will probably initially take inventory of the props available.
- Eventually someone will figure out that they might be able to stretch the inner tube, with all ropes attached, around the bucket. By pulling on the ropes from equal distances around the circle, they will be able to stretch the rubber tube and place it around the bucket. The rubber tube will then be holding the bucket tightly and the participants can transport it down the trail.
- There will be a flurry of ideas and movement.
- When using blindfolded variations, sighted participants usually brainstorm possible solutions to the problem, ignoring the potential of unsighted participants.
- Participants will be shouting out directions and the situation will be extremely chaotic.
- Sighted participants may become increasingly frustrated with the fact that they cannot touch materials. Unsighted participants may be frustrated that they are not receiving adequate instructions.

Safety

- When using blindfolds, remind people that they need to watch out for their partners at all times.
- Ask people to walk slowly when guiding blindfolded partners.
- Spot people as they move over and around hazardous areas such as tree roots and low branches.

Debrief Issues

- **Problem Solving:**
Were both sighted and unsighted participants involved in the problem-solving process? Were all suggestions from the group heard and given equal consideration? Were the unsighted participants given opportunities to contribute to the problem-solving process? Were they heard?
- **Communication:**
Many times good suggestions are offered. However, they become lost in the shuffle of trying to solve the problem. How did sighted participants communicate with their unsighted partners?
- **Inclusion:**
Did all members of the team participate equally? Was everyone involved in the process? If not, why and what were the consequences?
- **Teamwork:**
For the blindfolded variation, how well did the individuals in the partnerships work together? How did the whole team work together?
- **Frustration:**
When were people frustrated? How did that affect their contributions to the group?

Trust Lean

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity serves two purposes: 1) To introduce the idea of trusting another person with your physical safety and 2) to teach participants the spotting command sequence. Using proper and good communication, participants will join with two other partners and lean back into the hands of their two partners.

Equipment Needs

A flat surface

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Have the group divide into groups of three.
- Tell them that in this activity they will have to trust the other people in their groups to support their weight. One person will lean back into the hands of the two partners behind him/her.
- Encourage the group to be supportive of each member and to recognize that this activity may be more challenging for some than others. Some people will feel more comfortable leaning farther than others.
- Demonstrate the spotting stance for this activity. Then have each person do the same. One leg forward of the other, front knee bent, weight forward slightly, hands up (“bumpers up”) fingers and thumbs together, palms out. Explain the reason behind each of these safety features.

- Tell them that they need to establish a system of communication so that everyone in the group knows what to do and when. Give them the following commands:

Leaner: "Spotters ready?"

Spotters: "Ready!!"

Leaner: "Falling?"

Spotters: "Fall away!!!!"

- Ask a group to demonstrate for you. Have two people stand behind the leaner. The leaner must stand very stiff, with his/her feet together, arms crossed at the wrists and folded up to his/her chest. The spotters should be in their best spotting stance.
- Go through the commands once more and then have them demonstrate the lean. On the first lean, have the spotters stand fairly close to the leaner. The leaner should only fall back 6 inches or so. Spotters stand the leaner back up when done.
- Reiterate that the spotters should be as supportive and confident as possible when shouting their commands. Be sure to emphasize that the leaner does not fall until they hear the "fall away" signal.
- Encourage the leaner to do up to three leans. On the first lean, have the spotters stand fairly close and then move back a few steps on each subsequent lean (6 inches, 10 inches, 15 inches).
- Make sure that each person in each group has the opportunity to lean. Be sure that you observe each group to make sure they know the commands and proper spotting stance.

Variations

- For those who want more of a challenge, the spotters can kneel behind the leaners. After catching them, the spotters should lower the leaners to the ground rather than standing them up.

What to Look For

- Comfort levels vary with leaning distance. Some people may choose not to lean. Encourage them to participate as spotters.
- Nervous laughter.

Safety

- Don't try this activity with a group that seems unable to remain focused. This activity challenges the abilities of a group to take appropriate risks and to provide effective support.
- Give each member of the group the authority to stop the activity at any time if they feel that it is unsafe. They should shout, "Stop!" if they see anything unsafe. Also, they should not say, "Ready," or, "Fall away," unless they are absolutely ready.
- Inappropriate comments about not catching the person are unacceptable. If you hear this, stop the activity and ask everyone to show encouragement; stress that this activity provides an opportunity for the group to show that they are trustworthy.

Debrief Issues

- Trust:
 - Why do we start with a close distance and work farther away?
 - How do you feel now that you've trusted these two other people?
 - How can we support people with different safety levels?
- Communication:
 - How important was our communication system? Why do we have the "stop" command?

Trust Circle (Wind in the Willows)

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity is similar in purpose to the Trust Lean in that it familiarizes participants with the spotting command sequence as well as with physically supporting members of their team. In this activity, participants stand in a circle with their hands up. One person stands in the middle and leans back and is then moved from person to person around the circle.

Equipment Needs

A flat surface

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- All team members, except one, stand in a tight circle shoulder to shoulder.
- One team member stands in the middle of the circle and is the leaner. This person stands his/her with feet together and arms crossed over his/her chest. Emphasize that he/she should remain as stiff and straight as possible with his/her feet firmly planted in a single spot for his/her time in the circle.
- Those in the circle are spotters and should assume the spotting position (one leg forward, one leg back, bumpers up).

- Tell them that they need to establish a system of communication so that everyone in the group knows what to do and when. Give them the following commands:

Leaner: "Spotters ready?"

Spotters: "Ready!!"

Leaner: "Falling?"

Spotters: "Fall away!!!!"

Emphasize that they shout these commands to make the leaner feel safe.

- After the leaner hears the command, "Fall away!" he/she may lean into the hands of the spotters.
- Spotters should then pass the leaner around the circle slowly and gently. After some time, the spotters may pass the leaner across the circle.
- When the leaner is comfortable or when the facilitator indicates, the group can stand the leaner up.
- This sequence continues until all participants have had the opportunity to lean—if they wish.

Variations

- Encourage participants to try falling with their eyes closed.

What to Look For

- Participants may try to push the leaner back and forth too fast.
- Supporters in the trust circle may put their bumpers down when the leaner is not near them.
- Make sure that all participants are comfortable with their own levels of challenge.

Safety

- When the group establishes the lean circle, make sure all participants are in a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder. All participants should be in the spotting position, with bumpers up at all times. Emphasize that there should be at least three pairs of hands on the leaner at all times.
- Emphasize that they should pass the leaner slowly!

Debrief Issues

- Teamwork:
What examples of physical, emotional, and psychological support did the participants exhibit during this activity? How important were these to the group? How important are they in other situations (work or school)?
- Trust:
How can participants transfer trust back to their work/school environments?
- Risk Taking:
Throughout the day, group members experienced varying levels of challenge. How has undertaking a challenge that seemed risky affected your feelings about yourself?

Trust Walk

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

This activity helps participants experience trusting another person with their emotional and physical safety. Each person will have the opportunity to be a sighted guide and a blindfolded participant. The object is for the sighted person to lead their partner on a walk that the facilitator leads.

Equipment Needs

- Blindfold for each pair of participants

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Tell the group that they are about to embark on a journey. Working in pairs, one person will start blindfolded, while one will be sighted and acting as a guide. Keep in mind the notion of Challenge by Choice and give them the option to simply close their eyes if they are not comfortable using a blindfold.
- The sighted guides must do whatever is necessary to prevent injury or discomfort to their partners. Guides must have physical contact with their partners at all times when they are moving.
- Guides can position themselves any way they want in order to most effectively lead their partners safely through the course. Possible guiding methods include holding hands, one arm around the waist, or walking in front with their partner's hands on their shoulders.

Demonstrate these for full understanding.

- Let them know that you will be leading the pairs on a path that you have previously scouted out. This path may require them to bend down as well as step over obstacles. Ensure them that nothing in the path will interfere with navigating safely with their guides.
- They should walk single file so that they are each following one pair ahead of them. They should follow exactly where the pair in front of them goes.
- Indicate that at a halfway point you will let them switch roles.
- Ask the pairs to decide who will be blindfolded first and who will lead.
- Next, ask them to decide on a method of leading that is comfortable for them both. Have them also discuss other signals and/or words that they can use to keep the blindfolded person both physically and emotionally safe.
- Pass out the blindfolds. As they put them on, encourage them to take off their glasses and close their eyes behind the blindfolds for added comfort.
- Begin walking slowly. Allow ample time for the pairs to negotiate the terrain and stop if necessary to prevent the pairs at the end of the line from dropping so far behind that they lose contact.

Variations

- Rather than forming pairs, have the group split into two even groups—one half will be blindfolded first. When everyone in the designated group is safely blindfolded, have the guides go over and stand next to a blindfolded person putting a hand on their shoulder. At the halfway point, have the guides place their charges in a designated area and stand with the other guides. When the last blindfolded person is there, have them remove their blindfolds. Do they know who their guides were? Give the blindfolds to the guides and repeat the process.
- Do the above and also designate that they cannot use verbal communication. Ask the group to brainstorm some nonverbal cues that will help them navigate the terrain and remain safe. The only breach of silence should be when a safety hazard that poses a significant danger or if any blindfolded partners begin to feel so uncomfortable that they want to stop.

What to Look For

- Facial expressions on the blindfolded person probably will include wincing, nervous laughter, and so forth. Also, probably intense concentration on the faces of the guides.
- Some guides will see this as an opportunity to scare their partners and will attempt to go off the designated trail. Make sure that you reiterate that they need to follow the pair in front of them **exactly**.

Safety

- Don't try this activity with a group that seems unable to remain safe. This activity challenges the abilities of a group to take appropriate risks and to provide effective and safe leadership.
- If at any point you observe something that is unsafe and you fear someone may be injured, you should intervene to spot, coach, or somehow assist the guide or blindfolded person.
- During sunny days, have participants shield their eyes when they remove their blindfolds.

Debrief Issues

- Communication:
What guiding method worked best? What sorts of verbal and nonverbal cues worked best?
- Trust:
What did trusting the other person take?
- Leadership:
What did being guided feel like? Being lead? What is your preference? Why?
- If you tried the variation above, did the blindfolded people know who their partners were? Could they tell whether their guides were male or female? How?

Blind Polygon/Shape

Description

Small Group
Indoor or Outdoor

While appearing easy on the surface, this activity can challenge even a good group to communicate effectively.

While blindfolded, the group must determine the length of a section of rope and create a square (or a triangle, rectangle, and so on) using the entire length of that rope.

Equipment Needs

- 1 piece of rope at least 50-feet long
- 1 blindfold per person
- A large, open, flat area

Briefing the Activity/Guidelines

- Ask participants to form a loose circle.
- Ask each person to put on a blindfold. You may also give people the option to close their eyes during the activity if they are not comfortable being blindfolded for the duration of the activity (usually 20–30 minutes).
- Reassure people that you will keep them safe at all times during the activity by keeping them from running into obstacles. Encourage them to move around slowly to minimize the risk of running into one another.
- Once all participants have been blindfolded, explain that you will be giving the group a length of rope to hold. Emphasize that the entire group will be holding onto the same length of rope.

- Emphasize that at no time during the activity can participants let go of the rope. They may slide their hands along the rope, but they may not let go.
- Explain that the group has two goals; they may be accomplished in any order. The first goal is to establish the length of the rope. You should encourage them to determine the actual length—as opposed to an estimate—of the rope. The second goal is to create the “perfect” square (or triangle, rectangle, and so on), using the entire length of the rope.
- When passing out the rope, have participants stand with hands open and palms up. Start with an end and give it to a quiet person. Continue passing the rope around the circle. You may want to pass the rope across the circle to several other people. Set it up so that the rope is mildly crisscrossed. The group will assume you maintained the circle shape and may be surprised to learn that they must untangle the rope in order to succeed.

Variations

- You may want to limit the goal to either determining the length of the rope *or* creating a shape.
- Another option to totally blind folding participants is making half of them blind and the other half mute.

What to Look For

- People will not understand that the rope is tangled, which may cause a lot of initial confusion.
- Many people may be talking at once. The folks who have the ends of the rope will be key players in helping to coordinate getting the ends together.
- People who have trouble visualizing what is going on may become frustrated; they also might tune out and become disinterested.
- The group may generate many ideas, few of which they will attempt or apply.

Safety

- As people are moving around, make sure that they can easily move past and around other people.
- Spot anyone who has to climb over ropes or over other people.
- Make sure that a large open area is available for this activity in order to avoid collisions.
- Encourage people throughout the duration of the activity. This will take their minds off of the fact that they are blindfolded.

Debrief Issues

- Communication:
What types of verbal and nonverbal communication did the group members use?
- Problem Solving:
Did the group have a planning process? How did the group decide on a strategy to use?
- Leadership:
Did one person emerge as a leader or were there many leaders? What was the role of the followers?
- Frustration:
At what point did anyone feel frustrated? Why? How could that have been overcome?

The Bicycle Wheel (a closing activity)

Description

Small Group: 5–20
Indoor or Outdoor

This closing activity allows people to use an object (bike tire) as a metaphor for their experiences.

Setup

Using an actual bike tire or a wheel of some sort (or other object; see variations), lay the wheel in the middle of the circle, covered by a blanket (before the group arrives).

Time of Activity

Depending on group size, this activity could take 15–45 minutes. Usually count on 10 minutes of introduction and reflection and 2 minutes per person of sharing.

Briefing of Activity/Guidelines:

- Share with the group that you have something special lying underneath the blanket that has meaning for you. In just a moment, you are going to reveal this object and ask each group member to look at it, and quietly reflect on their own. They are to reflect on the object, and review in their mind any memories or thoughts that this object brings to them. These thoughts can relate to themselves, early memories with friends or family, experiences with their current groups and/or programs, or analogies that they can apply to their lives. Tell them to be creative.
- Uncover the bike tire and encourage quiet reflection (maybe 2–3 minutes, depending on your group's needs or ability to reflect).

Facilitating the Activity

- Ask for a volunteer to start the “go around.” Usually sitting next to someone whom you think will share something meaningful first, to set a good example, is a good idea. Ask each person to share a thought, statement, memory, or reflection about the wheel that could relate to their group of people.

Debrief

Because this activity in itself is a debrief, simply close the go around by sharing a statement of your own and apply it the group, the program, or the experience that folks have been involved with. Some examples follow:

- Tire has been many places; it has its own history, its own story to tell.
- It's like a roulette wheel—it keeps spinning and spinning, looking for where it will stop.
- Sometimes you are riding high on the wheel. But as the wheel goes around, sometimes you are low. If you stay low you can't move forward. Don't get caught staying low—just keep riding.
- The tire has spokes in its wheel. If just one is out of line, the whole tire wobbles. We all need to work together to spin forward.
- The wheel has traveled many places; reminds me of places I've been, places I am going.

Variations

- You can do this activity with any object that has meaning to you (for example, a canoe paddle, hiking boots, gardening tools, and so on). Be creative!
- You can use this activity as a large-group closure. After each member of a small group has shared their thoughts, have the small groups as a whole come up with an analogy for their teams to report back to the “larger group” as a closure.

Chapter 4: Games, Games, and More Games

This section focuses on activities you can use as warm-ups at the beginning of a program or meeting, or interspersed throughout the program. A great time to incorporate some re-energizing activities is after lunch or when participants are tired. The debriefing section has been eliminated from the games section because the main goal is simply to have fun and play together as a group. Debriefing can certainly occur at the end of even the most basic tag game. Questions you can ask include: Did we have fun? Did anyone challenge himself/herself in this activity?

Remind participants to be aware and careful of their surroundings while playing games. The ground can be uneven, rocky, or have other obstacles; indoor spaces, of course, have walls and other potentially dangerous and unsafe objects. Please remind your participants that they do not want to ruin their day by hurting themselves while playing!

Alaskan Baseball

Description

This activity rates very high on the fun-factor scale. Framing this activity as though you are from Alaska and play professionally on the Alaskan baseball team is always amusing; you may even be out scouting for new team members.

Equipment

- A large open space or field
- Lots of energy
- A willingness to be silly
- A rubber chicken

Briefing

- You will need to divide the group in half. In these two separate teams, explain that each inning will have one team hitting, while the other team is acting as fielders.
- Hitting involves having one team member hurl the rubber chicken in any direction that he/she chooses.

- Once the hitting team has tossed the chicken they will huddle together and have the one team “hitter” run around the huddle to score points.
- As the hitter is running around his/her huddled teammates, the fielders will rapidly run over to the rubber chicken. The rubber chicken is fielded by having the fielding team form a line and pass the chicken over one person’s shoulders, through the next person’s legs, over the shoulders, through the legs, and so on until the chicken reaches the end of the line.
- At this point, the fielding team will yell “Chicken!” and will then become hitters as they toss the chicken with wild abandon for the opposing team to field.
- The teams must keep track of their total number of runs. Inevitably the numbers get confused and lost in all of the fun and excitement. Play until the teams tie!

Safety

- Be aware of uneven ground.
- Watch for participants who might become overly excited about Alaskan Baseball and may attempt wild dives and saves.

Clothespin Tag or Backstabbers

Description

Each participant starts with three clothespins. The objective is to get rid of all of your clothespins, as well as any others that might get pinned on you during the game.

Equipment

- About 3 clothespins per participant. Be sure that they are the spring-loaded type of clothespin as opposed to the older wooden clothespins.

Briefing

- Each player will receive three clothespins at the beginning of the game.
- Participants attempt to pin their three clothespins onto the other players' clothing, who, in turn, will be trying to do the same!
- The back is the only appropriate area for participants to pin each other.
- As soon as participants get rid of all of their clothespins, they must jump up and down yelling that they in fact have gotten rid of all of their clothespins.
- Once clipped, a participant cannot try to rub off the clothespin on another person or the wall. Participants may not grab at clothing to try to slow down other players.

Safety

- Participants must pin each other only on the back to avoid pinning any inappropriate areas, such as the earlobes or hair!
- Make sure that all of the participants are wearing loose-fitting tops.

Penguin Tag

Description

This activity is great for any age group, but younger participants particularly love this fun version of tag.

Equipment

- A large, open, flat space or field
- Boundaries (rope, cones, and so forth)

Briefing

- One person is chosen to be the “king penguin” or “It.”
- All other participants will move around the bounded space doing their best imitations of penguin walks—arms close to the sides, with flipper-like fingers flexed outward, and feet waddle-width apart.
- The king penguin is trying to tag the other participants.
- If the king penguin tags one of the other penguins, he/she must remain “frozen” until another penguin participant comes along and tags him/her with a flipper. He/She may then re-enter the game.

Safety

- This tag game is “fast waddling,” so feel free to encourage the participants to monitor their pace—no running!
- Ensuring that the king penguin practices safe tags of the other penguins is important. Appropriate tags are gentle and at about waist level using a “flipper.”

Asteroids

Description

This super-charged energizer is out of this world!

Equipment

- Lots of soft throwables (fleece balls, small stuffed animals, Koosh balls, and so on)

Briefing

- The facilitator will begin the activity by throwing all of the soft balls and throwables into the air and yelling, “Asteroids!”
- The participants then gather throwables and throw them at each other.
- As participants get hit by one of the asteroids, they must crouch down close to the ground.
- If a throwable lands within arm’s reach while a participant is crouched down, he/she may reach out and grab it. He/She is then back into play and may also throw these retrieved objects at other participants.
- The objective here is to use a great deal of energy running around and safely throwing soft objects at other people—all things that your mother always told you not to do.

Safety

- Be aware of participants who are not appropriately throwing the objects and who may be throwing objects at other participants’ heads. Participants should throw objects at the torso area and below the knees.

Bonker Boffers

Description

You will ask your participants to use their noodles in this activity. This is a new and different version of hockey that should be played with wild abandon!

Equipment

- Enough noodles or boffers for each participant
- Inflated beach ball(s) (depending on the size of your group)
- Cones or goals
- A large open field is ideal for this activity. However an open indoor space, such as a gym, can also work effectively.

Briefing

- Bonker Boffers is essentially hockey with foam noodles. As a facilitator you can decide how stringent you would like to be in holding true to rules and guidelines.
- In general, you will want to break a larger group into two teams.
- The objectives are to have fun and attempt to score goals on the other team.
- Play until participants are tired or until there is a tie. This is fun for all age-groups!

Safety

- Be aware of “high sticking.” The noodles should stay very close to the ground while in play to avoid hitting other players in the face.
- This is an active game and accidents can happen as people get very involved and get excited.

Wizards and Gelflings

Description

Wizards are all-powerful and out to get the gelflings. Gelflings are happy, spunky creatures who are always willing to give each other a helping hand!

Equipment

- A large open space or field
- A wizard’s magical orb (or soft ball(s))

Briefing

- Wizards and gelflings dwell in this fantasy. To begin the activity, choose at least one wizard—depending on the number of participants, you may choose several wizards (2–3). The wizards are all-powerful beings and are very serious. The wizards attempt to tag as many gelflings as possible with their magical orbs to put an end to their fun.
- The other members of this realm are gelflings. Gelflings are indeed a very fun-loving and energetic bunch. All gelflings have very high-pitched voices and like to laugh a lot. In this activity, the gelflings will laugh, run, and bounce along while trying to avoid being tagged by the wizards.
- As a wizard tags gelflings, they must remain frozen and with their very high-pitched voices squeal, “Help me! Help me! Help me!”
- As two other gelflings come along to help their friend they must join hands surrounding the frozen gelfling. In unison, with their high-

pitched voices, they must yell, “Go free little gelfling, go free!” while bringing their arms up and down three times.

- The newly freed gelfing may then re-enter the play.

Safety

- Check the ground or area conditions for uneven or rocky ground. Avoid these areas.
- The wizards must be careful in throwing their magical orbs so they do not hurt any of the gelfings. As a facilitator you should ask that the wizards throw their orbs only below the knees and gently toward the torso area.

Throw Me the Chicken

Description

This is a great energizer for both large and small groups, as well as for the young and old. Depending on the number of participants, you can incorporate additional rubber chickens into the game to create an additional element of challenge and excitement.

Equipment

- An open space or field
- Visual boundaries (cones, ply rope, and so on)
- The all-important rubber chicken(s)!

Briefing

- To start this tag game, you must designate at least one person as “It.”
- Depending on the number of participants, you may want to add in additional chickens and other people to be “It.” With a larger group (more than 20–30 participants), having between 2 and 3 people as “It” works well.
- The individuals who are “It” have the “power of the chicken.” This allows them to tag other participants.
- A safe tag with the rubber chicken is a soft touch below the knees.
- Once other players have been tagged with the rubber chicken, they also have the “power of the chicken” and are able to tag other participants.

- Now the strategic aspects of this very complex game come into play. Players who have been tagged and have the “power of the chicken,” but may not actually be in possession of a rubber chicken, can call out, “Throw me the chicken!” This call acknowledges that this individual is open and can receive a flying chicken to then attempt to tag other players.
- When a player catches the chicken, that person is allowed to move three steps toward a person whom they wish to tag.
- After they have taken those three steps, they must stop and attempt to tag, or toss the chicken off to another player who has the power of the chicken.

Safety

- Be mindful of the terrain that you and your group are playing on.
- Ensure that those who are “It” practice controlled tagging.

Triangle Tag

Description

You can use this great activity as an energizer. It works well both in the small group and in a larger group. How do the triangle team members need to work together and help to look out for each other?

Equipment

- A large open space or field (dependent on the number of participants)
- Optional: Visual boundaries and/or cones, play rope, and so on

Briefing

- You will need to break a large group into smaller groups of four.
- Within the smaller groups, one person needs to decide to be “It” for the beginning of the activity.
- The three remaining people join hands in the shape of a triangle. One person within the triangle group chooses to be the “point.”
- The objective is for the person who is “It” to tag the “point” player.
- The other two members of the triangle attempt to protect the point person from “It.” A wild tag game with lots of swinging ensues.
- “It” may not tag across the arms of the triangle, they may only tag by moving themselves toward the “point” person’s back.
- This can actually be a rather tiring game; play until participants are tired or the “point” position has rotated through the group.

Safety

- Participants must be careful with each other. Triangle players tend to swing their partners around. Those players who have had a past shoulder or wrist injury may wish to use Challenge by Choice to find a different way to participate.
- Be mindful of appropriate tagging, which includes gentle tags to the back.
- As always, remind the participants of the space in which they are playing.

Alien Space Invaders from Mars

Description

This is the epic game of the century: Earthlings battle the alien space invaders from Mars!

Equipment

- A large open space or field
- Visual boundaries (either cones or notable trees)
- A flying saucer (or Frisbee)

Briefing

- Choose several participants (about 5–6 for a group of about 20–30) to be “alien space invaders from Mars.”
- The aliens should make a great deal of strange and funny noises, and have strange and unusual postures and ways of moving. Encourage them to be their best alien selves!
- All of the other participants are earthlings. They should be their best earthling selves!
- To begin the game, the earthlings are opposite the aliens.
- The aliens will yell across the field, “Earthlings, are you ready for an alien space invasion from Mars?” and will toss their flying saucer toward the earthlings.
- If an earthling catches the flying saucer, the aliens die and Earth is saved.
- If an earthling touches the flying saucer, but he/she drops it, the aliens move toward the earthlings while trying to tag them as they

move to the opposite side of the field. Any earthlings who are tagged become aliens.

- If the earthlings do not touch the flying saucer, it returns to the aliens for another space invasion.
- You and your group can play this game for hours, so just use your best judgment for when you would like play to end.

Safety

- As a facilitator be aware of the flight of the Frisbee. Be sure that the Frisbee is not aimed at any other participants on the opposite side of the play space.
- Be mindful of players who may be running with wild abandon to escape the clutches of the aliens.

Birdie Perch

Description

This wonderful activity experientially splits a group in half.

Equipment

- A large open space or field

Briefing

- Ask each person to find a partner. It can be a person whom they know well, or someone that they would like to get to know better.
- These partners will create two circles facing each other, with one circle on the outside and the other on the inside.
- The facilitator will direct the action of the group. The outside group will move in a clockwise direction around the circle, while the inside group will move in a counterclockwise direction. In other words, the partners will be moving farther and farther away from each other.
- While the group is moving around in the circle, the birdies will be flapping their best bird-like wings and wildly chirping.
- When the facilitator yells, “Perch!” all of the birdies must quickly find their partners, who are their perches.
- Perches will be kneeling down on one knee awaiting their birdies.
- Once the birdies have found their perches, they will gently and carefully sit on the knee of their perches.

- You can continue this for several rounds.
- To divide the group in half for further activities, simply stop the action and ask for all of the birdies to be in one group while all of the perches will be in another group.


Safety

- A few safety considerations to keep in mind include reminding the birdies that their perches are not meant to fully support all of their weight. A demonstration of a birdie on a perch is always helpful. This birdie should have their backside hovering over the perch’s knee, such that if the perch were not there at all, the birdie would support itself.
- After the facilitator exclaims, “Perch!” often pandemonium breaks out. Be mindful that participants are being careful together and that they keep their “bumpers up” while running, so they don’t hit each other while on the move.

Chapter 5: Appendixes

The Facilitator's Bag of Tricks

Here is a list of the essential items for facilitating the activities in this manual as well as a few other items that are fun to use in programming. As you continue to grow as a facilitator, so too will your Bag of Tricks. Purchasing all of these items at once is not important, but to collecting them over the course of your facilitation career is a fun project.

- 
- Rubber chicken
 - Play rope(s)
 - Cones
 - Soft throwables
 - Small stuffed animals
 - Fleece balls
 - Koosh balls
 - Hula Hoop(s)
 - Markers
 - Blindfolds
 - Bucket
 - Beach ball(s)
 - Noodles
 - This manual

People Bingo Cards

Likes to dance	Has worked on a farm	Has ever played baseball	Favorite holiday is Valentine's Day	Has been to a circus
Has been to Disneyworld	Keeps a journal	Was born outside of Pennsylvania	Owens a bicycle	Has traveled out of the country
Shares the same birthday month as you do	Similar interests/hobbies as you	FREE!	Loves snow	Has a unique scar
Can play a musical instrument	Has a pet	Likes to draw and/or paint	Has a goldfish	Has more than 3 brothers or sisters
Has traveled to another state	Enjoys swimming	Has won something in a contest	Has seen a hawk or in eagle the wild	Has been skiing

Likes to sing	Has ridden a horse	Has seen a movie this summer	Has been to a music concert	Loves ice cream
Has been to Disneyworld	Keeps a journal	Was born in Pennsylvania	Has been to a Penn State football game	Has traveled out of the country
Was born the same month as you	Also enjoys your favorite activity	FREE!	Loves snow	Has ever seen a snake
Can play a musical instrument	Likes to swim	Likes to draw and/or paint	Likes to play sports	Has won a trophy
Likes to read	Enjoys skiing	Has been camping	Has seen a hawk or eagle in the wild	Has braces

Resource List

These materials contain activities and ideas for use in breaking barriers and developing effective teamwork within either new or standing groups.

Cavert, Chris, et al. 1999. *Affordable Portables: A Working Book of Initiative Activities and Problem Solving Elements*. Wood N Barnes, Oklahoma City, Okla.
ISBN 1-8854-1340-0

Gass, Michael. 1995. *Book of Metaphors* vol II. Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque, Iowa.
ISBN 0-7872-0306-8

Graham, John. 1997. *Outdoor Leadership Technique, Common Sense & Self-Confidence*. Mountaineer Books, Seattle, Wash.
ISBN 0-8988-6502-6

Johnson, David W., and Frank P. Johnson. 1999. *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*. Allyn and Bacon, Toronto, Canada.
ISBN 0-2053-0859-7

Nadler, Reldan S., John L. Luckner. 1992. *Processing the Adventure Experience: Theory and Practice*. Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque, Iowa.
ISBN 0-8403-7028-8

New Games Foundation. 1976, 1981. *The New Games Book & More New Games*. Andrew Fluegelman, ed. Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y. Out of print.
ISBN 0-3851-2516-X (1976 edition),
0-3851-7511-0 (1981 edition)

Rohnke, Karl. 1991, 1994. *The Bottomless Bag Again!* Dubuque, Kendall/Hunt, Iowa.
ISBN 0-7872-6772-4

Rohnke, Karl. 1989. *Cowtails and Cobras II: A Guide to Games, Initiatives, Ropes Courses, and Adventure Curriculum*. Project Adventure, Dubuque, Iowa.
ISBN 0-8403-5434-7

Rohnke, Karl. 1995. *Funn Stuff*. Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque, Iowa.
ISBN 0-7872-1633-X

Rohnke, Karl. 1984. *Silver Bullets: A Guide to Initiative Problems, Adventure Games, and Trust Activities*. Project Adventure, Hamilton, Mass.
ISBN 0-8403-5682-X

Rohnke, Karl, and Steve Butler. 1996. *Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities & Guide to Effective Leadership*. Project Adventure, Hamilton, Mass.
ISBN 0-7872-2103-1

Schoel, Jim, and Mike Stratton (eds.). 1995. *Gold Nuggets: Readings for Experiential Education*. Project Adventure, Hamilton, Mass.
ISBN 0-7872-1925-8

Web Sites

www.fundoing.com

www.teamworkandteamplay.com

www.gameskidsplay.net

www.training-wheels.com

www.sportime.com

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